

JoyNotes!

The Oakwood Experience



Presented by Members of the
Oakwood College Literary Guild
Edited and Compiled by
Cecily Daly, Ed.D.



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JoyNotes!

The Oakwood Experience

Impressions from members of the
Oakwood College Literary Guild

Cecily Daly, Ed.D., Editor

EDUCATION EXCELLENCE ETERNITY

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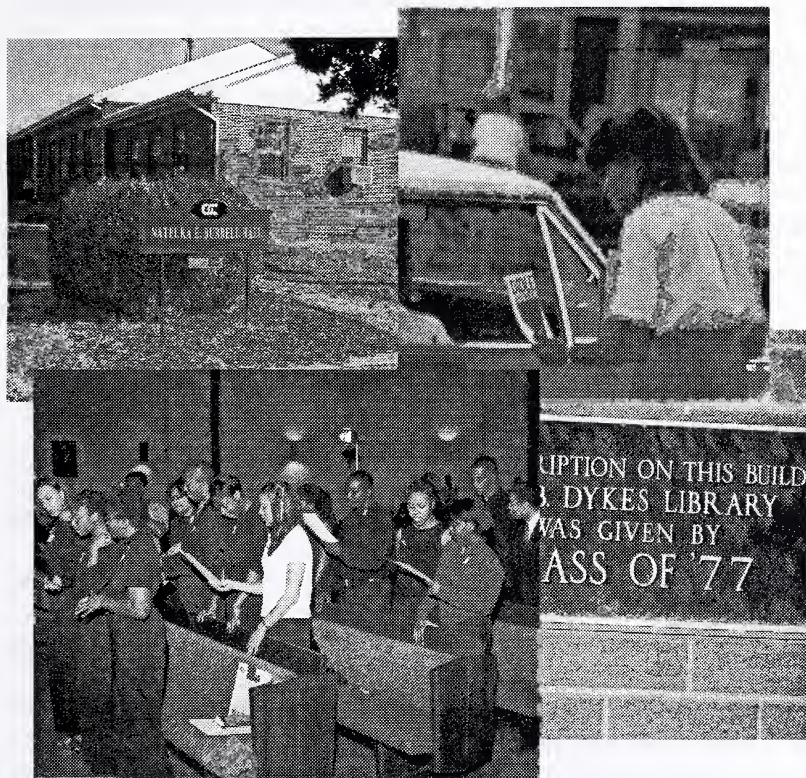
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all who have passed through Oakwood College and have been exposed to the unique Oakwood College experience. Moreover, this book is especially dedicated to all who enjoy reading and writing.



Acknowledgments

JOY NOTES is the product of the joint efforts of many people to whom we cordially express gratitude. To the many who have gone beyond the second mile we gratefully acknowledge:

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Editor

Preface

JoyNotes! The Oakwood Experience is a compilation of personal experiences from the Oakwood family members (administrators, faculty, staff, and students). This book represents the first formal literary project of the Oakwood College Literary Guild/American Christian Writers – Chapter 27 (ACW 27), formerly known as the Literary Links Club. Therefore, it is both my privilege and my pleasure to present it to everyone. The idea of creating such a devotional was suggested by Mrs. Sonia Paul, shared by many other persons, endorsed by the club members, and made possible by the many contributors.

Collecting and organizing these experiences into one book was a difficult task, that at times I wanted to forget, but on the other hand, it has given me the joy of accomplishment. The many authors of our stories have made a valuable contribution to the reading audience, sharing experiences which are meaningful to them. In the days of the Israelites, God commanded them, "Take you up every man of you a stone...that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask...saying, What mean you by these stones? Then ye shall answer them." I am convinced that even so today, we should set up written memorials of our outstanding heritage and unforgettable Oakwood College experiences. These varied testimonies of a wonderful, loving God have strengthened my faith, and I believe that they will impact the lives of each reader to create a spiritual ripple effect as these stories are shared with others.

Joy Notes The Oakwood Experience is arranged into four chapters: THE SCROLL (Spiritual), THE TASSEL (Academic) AND TASSEL THREADS (Academic Support), THE KEYBOARD (Musical) and THE CUP (Social).

THE SCROLL symbolizes the spiritual experience which has given people a new and positive outlook on life through an experiential knowledge of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

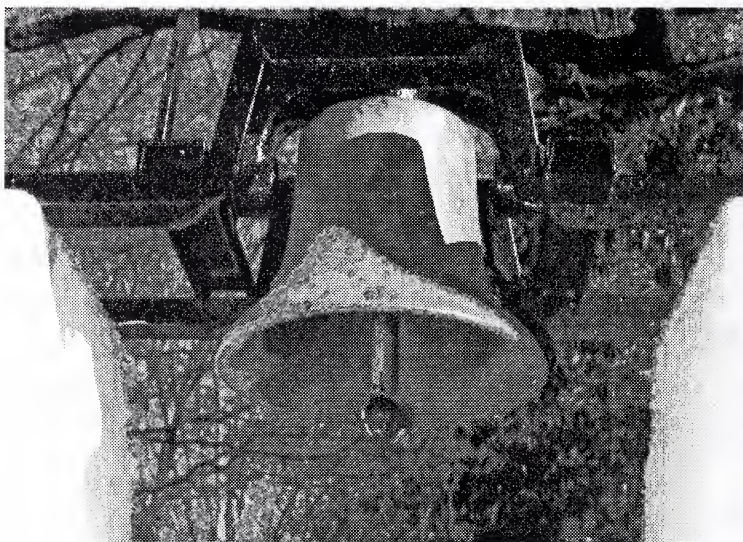
THE TASSEL and TASSEL THREADS symbolize the academic and the academic support experiences which are unforgettable to Oakwood students. From the outstanding testimonies of these experiences, students have learned to fully trust God to open doors for them and know that He always has a way out.

THE KEYBOARD symbolizes the musical experience which cannot be disconnected from Oakwood because it is an integral part of our college life. In this chapter the reader will become aware that the

ministry of the college is to a great extent rooted in its music. The musical experience has been a blessing to many. Through such avenues as words, music, harmony, musical groups and a number of choirs, God has communicated with many and enabled them to turn their unproductive lives around. The various experiences of THE KEYBOARD attest to this fact.

THE CUP symbolizes the social experience. One must realize that there is a wider perspective than academics only. The social aspect is very important. Through the social activities and extracurricular aspects of life, along with the spiritual, musical and academic offerings, students are able to develop through a balanced program representing Him in all areas of their lives.

Cecily Daly



Foreword

For many years now, I have been teaching children of my Oakwood classmates and colleagues, as students are sent here by their parents to acquire, like their parents, "the Oakwood Experience." A parent recently confided: "We encouraged our son to come to Oakwood, but he has chosen to remain close to home in Toronto. We still hope he will come for at least a year, to get the Oakwood experience." Clearly, the "Oakwood experience" is treasured, and it continues to influence Oakwoodites long after graduation, perhaps even increasing in value.

What is The Oakwood Experience? A meeting ground and melting pot, Oakwood College is a unique, vibrant blend of Seventh-day Adventist, African-American, international; spiritual-mental-physical-social wholeness, nurturing, sharing, learning, growing, singing; academic excellence, spiritual enhancement, enduring social relationships, identity development; physical beauty of spacious grounds, trees, rolling lawns, brilliant flowers, shaded walks, attractive buildings. The dynamic environment created by the interaction of these forces enfolds and imbues each person who walks on the campus, whether a resident or a guest, whether eager or reluctant.

Each writer of *JoyNotes! The Oakwood Experience* gives a glimpse into a heart moved by Oakwood College. More eloquently than any abstract in a foreword, *JoyNotes!* defines The Oakwood Experience.

Lela Gooding, Ph.D., professor of English and chair of the Department of English and Communications.

Joy Notes! The Oakwood Experience

An Oakwood College Literary Guild Production

The O.C. Literary Guild, ACW 27 is a student association of writers, poets, playwrights, and orators. Our mission is to enhance literary skills through various activities and workshops in reading, writing and critical thinking.

As an O.C. Literary Guild member you will participate in:

Book discussions
Poetry readings
Storytelling
Creative writing workshops
Reading outreach to the home bound
Young readers' tutorial
And much more!

Our Goal:

To expand your literary horizons!

Visit our website at <http://www.oakwood.edu/english>
or email us at literaryguild@oakwood.edu

The Essence of Joy

It is my extreme pleasure to be president of the organization producing *JoyNotes!* This inspirational book is a result of hard work, perseverance, and faith. I hope you find it to be stimulating and life changing. As this book brings joy to your life, please share that joy with someone else.

Jessica Cook
President, Literary Guild, 2001

JoyNotes! Inspirational thoughts from the Oakwood College Family. These testimonies are written expressions; their messages ring loud in the hearts of those who read them. So, lounge in a lawn chair and allow the mid-day sun to caress your face. Snuggle up in a cozy corner in your favorite chair with this tremendously uplifting text. Be transformed by the reflections of minds, the impressions of hearts, and the inspiration of souls.

LaTasha Betts
Immediate Past President, Literary Guild, 2000

The Legend of JoyNotes!

Looking back on dorm life at Oakwood I, like others, have many fond memories. For me they lie in Josie St. Aimee's Drama Group, Darrel Spivey and Carmela Monk's AYS, Dwayne and Greg's funny antics, USM International Socials, Freshman Talent Night and Peterson Hall/Carter Hall Water Fights. Some of the memories were not as warm. Like many others, my "downs" always came on Fridays at sack-lunch time or the end of lab time. Then, the mad rush of the week came to an abrupt halt!

Often the low feelings came, but not for lack of a buzz of activity, or a plethora of programs to attend. Sometimes even in the midst of the crowd, I would feel depressed. So I tuned in to those around me, and I realized that there were other students around like me battling similar feelings, personal pain, homesickness, financial and/or personal difficulty. To tide myself over, I decided to try something new, something that would distract me from myself. One activity that helped me to overcome those feelings was Joy Notes, Inc.

From early teenage days, I remembered reading one of the *Guide* magazine stories from one of our campuses. A group of students had started a secret organization of cheer called S.O.L.O. I wanted to contact them, but by this time, S.O.L.O. was no longer in operation. However, I had a very keen interest in nice greeting cards. One particular line I liked was called Love Notes. Hmmmmmm! Students needed encouragement and did not have a note from home or a boyfriend. B-I-N-G-O! That was it — I would start one at Oakwood. Like S.O.L.O., Joy Notes would be anonymous so that thanks could go to God. Like the love hearts on the Love Notes cards, musical notes were adopted, and the "Inc." as a personal signature. This would be perfect, I thought, and it would bring joy. So Joy Notes, Inc. was born in 1985.

At first, I handpicked about 30 friends, who should receive the first Joy Notes. I copied poems, rolled them up with ribbon and candy and later dropped them off. Pretty soon this grew into little joy bags and graduated to 50 to 100 persons per weekend. The joy bags would contain candy, miscellaneous thoughts, a poem, but always an anonymous note: "Love from Joy Notes, Inc." At first, the project was very sporadic because it was funded from the little savings I kept; sometimes I borrowed so that Joy Notes could be sent out.

Occasionally, I would call my sister, Nadine, and friends Victoire or Yvette to help me, but other times the bagging was solo. I knew the routine by heart: get the list of dorm residents, prepare the bags, copy and cut the poems or bookmarks, add candy, nuts, pencils, or whatever just so they were all the same. There was always stuff to do: copies to run, ribbon to cut, lists to make, room numbers to check and the excitement of the drop off at AYS time, Friday after midnight or before dawn Sabbath morning. Of course, there was always that one person who would question something that was lying around in my room, or the one I would inevitably bump into in the hallway while making a drop-off. Usually, I would have a ready excuse. "Oh, yes, I got one too. I cannot imagine who it came from, but if I find out, I'll tell you." Then I would walk off giggling.

Pretty soon, the focus of my weekends changed. My sadness became punctuated with activity centered more on others and less on myself. At the time, I was also working along with Darrel Spivey on the AYS committee for posters and layout. I was asked to design campus notes for the AYS organization. Since I had some, I used one that was sent in the joy bags. From there, the Joy Notes became an established tradition which is still a part of the Oakwood Experience today.

I am delighted to find that what started long ago as a way to cheer friends, still continues on campus today. It is my hope that sharing this memory will not be misinterpreted as an attempt for personal recognition, but only as the verse says: Never underestimate the value of a good deed. Use every opportunity to add joy to the world. Give love. Give hope. Give joy. God has promised: "...I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations" (Isaiah 60:15).

Hilary Daly, Class of 1988

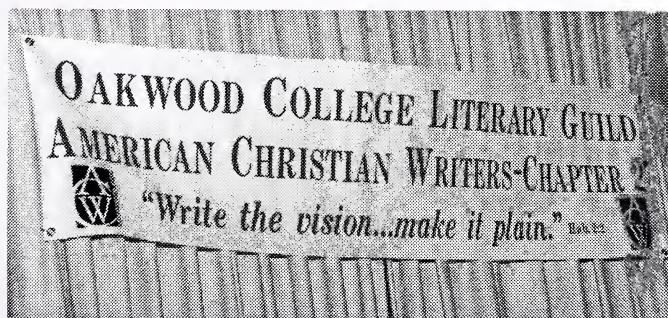
1 *The Scroll*



The Spiritual Experience

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As the hart panteth after the water brooks,

So panteth my soul after thee, O God...

Yet the Lord will command His lovingkindness

In the daytime,

And in the night

His song shall be with me,

And my prayer

Unto the God of my life.

Psalm 42: 1, 8

Filler of My Every Need

I came to Oakwood empty-handed
Without any oil in my lamp
Without any light to see
With only an empty soul.
As time slipped by,
Someone named Jesus
Gave to me a helping hand.
He filled me with His Holy Spirit,
And now my soul is full of rejoicing.
He did all this, because I
Became His best friend.
I looked into His eyes and
Began counting all my blessings.
Even today, Jesus has never
Let go of me. He stands by my side,
Through thick and thin.
He will do the same for you,
If you allow Him to.

Thamar Deslier

*"...whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall
never thirst..." John 4:14*

Just Stand

Therefore, stand! Tighten the belt of truth securely around yourself...And pray for the power of the spirit at every encounter because your life depends on it...

Ephesians 6:14, 18 (The Clear Word)

I don't wanna go!" I whined to the Lord like a disobedient three-year-old. Homework backed up like sewage. Midterm exams thundered like an approaching storm. Projects crashed and burned moments after take-off. My eyes were heavy, my body was exhausted, and my brain was drained. Let me not mention empty pockets, overdue perms, and piling laundry! And now the Thursday night Bell Tower program tugged at my waning strength. Besides, Lord, who wants to come to Bell Tower on a cold Thursday night when he could be studying, skating, or watching a movie? Excuses raced marathons around my mind, hurdling that still, small, nagging voice, crouching to vault out of my mouth. "I do not have time or energy for this, Lord. I don't want to go!"

But the voice refused to be silent. Experience had taught me that the "voice" would bug me all night until I submitted. So to silence it, I reluctantly put on my boots, coats, and gloves, grabbed an umbrella and charged into the night, angry and complaining all the way, half-heartedly praying the drizzle would stop.

I arrived at the little stone "chapel" under the stars, grasped the bell's tongue and banged it against the inside with all my might. Then I stood and waited...A girl dashed from Carter Hall into CAA in Cunningham Hall to be tutored. A sluggish group sauntered from the Student Center to the movie in Moran Hall Auditorium. I waited...I rang the bell again...and waited...A couple melted into the shadows. A few self-proclaimed, undiscovered rap artists ambled by the empty bell headed to the skating rink (I delayed ringing until they passed!).

My anger and frustration grew as long minutes ticked away. I closed my eyes and bowed my head (more to hide my face than to humble myself), and rehearsed my list of excuses to God. A couple passed by, talking loudly. When one said, "Shhh. She's praying," they were silent for a few paces before whispering, "It's too cold for Bell Tower." I should have been grateful that even my angry prayer was a silent witness. "Not only that," I continued, "it's embarrassing out here alone!"

"Yes, I remember being alone and naked," He whispered back,

"wanting to forget the cross and go home to those who loved me. But you needed me, so I waited...I only ask you to stand."

I exhaled slowly. "I'm sorry."

"Yes, I know you are."

"Forgive me"

"I have. I do. Just stand..."

"Help me."

"I do. Just stand..."

So I waited cheerfully. Then finally I saw a figure aimed decidedly toward the Bell! Another girl walked around from the other side. Soon there were four of us. Two volunteered for special music! I was ashamed and tearfully testified of my impatient heart. The clapping warmed my hands, and I forgot about my excuses. I then remembered that I had accepted the blood that Jesus shed for me, so I can call Him up, tell Him what I want, and turn it over to Him.

I left the Bell Tower refreshed, humbled, and confident God would do as He had promised. And He did. I finished my homework. Mid-term exams covered exactly what little I had studied, and project deadlines were extended. If that is not enough, there was a dollar behind my bed for one load of laundry, and my roommate had a *Dark and Lovely* perm kit left over. I wonder why I must learn the same lesson so often. Every time I put God first, He puts my work on top. When I praise Him, He cannot resist my sincere cries for help. When I lean on Him, I can stand.

Eishah Emmons-Smith

Tears and Laughter

...weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.

Psalm 30:5

No matter what problem you encounter, no matter how down you are, you are just where you are supposed to be. The Lord allows you to be in the situation you are in for a reason. He allows people to come into your life for a reason. But we always complain.

Don't complain. Allow the blessing that the Lord has in store for you to take place. Good or bad, He wants the problem or situation to mold and strengthen your character. Strengthening character is a big task we all face. Remember without a storm you could not look forward to the sunshine; without tears you could not allow God to wipe them away, and without Calvary there would be no crown.

So when problems get you down and your situations seem too hard to bear, stand tall and allow the Lord to do what He intends to do, for His eye is on the sparrow; so we should know He sees and cares for us too.

Natasha Sterjn

Patience

For ye have need of patience...ye might receive the promise.

Hebrews 10:36

Oakwood College was not one of my choices for the ideal school. I wanted to venture out and attend a school that all the black Adventists did not want to attend. All my friends and acquaintances wanted to attend Oakwood, because it was prestigious to be recognized as an "Oakwoodite." In my opinion, the prestige was not worth the sacrifice and so at first, I was dead-set against going to Oakwood. I made plans to go elsewhere, but thanks to God, He had other plans for me. He had already prepared a blueprint for me to attend Oakwood.

The day I decided to go to Oakwood was an experience that I will never forget. Initially, when I started to send my documents to Oakwood, everything was going well. I was feeling good about my decision, until I received word that my documents had been misplaced. I was astonished and questioned myself, "How could my documents be misplaced?" I knew I should not have come here. However, I had second thoughts. Patiently, I awaited the day when I would make my way to Huntsville.

Now it was time to start the whole process of being financially cleared in order to occupy my room. With all that taken care of, I wanted to unpack my bags and settle in. That was not what my mom had in mind. She thought it would be best if I went back to the hotel with her to get some sleep and then return the next day to tackle all the other requirements. Half-heartedly, I took her advice; really, I had no choice. The next day, my mom prepared to leave me, which meant that I would be on my own to handle my business. It seemed as if everything in my room took forever to be put in place. When the first week finally came to an end, I realized one new thing about myself. This new thing in my life was actually an improvement. Sometimes, I

slip up but I know that God is working on my behalf to help me become more patient. I discovered that college required patience. It goes from lining up at the cafeteria to waiting to get my card swiped at Tuesday chapel; whatever it is, I must have patience.

I am glad that this is a new character trait of mine, and I truly owe to Oakwood. My experience here taught me that even when things may seem to be moving slowly, the Lord has already plugged in His master plan. All I have to do is sit back and allow Him to do His work. Thank you, Oakwood, for teaching me how to be patient.

Melissa Hedman-Baker

Decisions! Decisions!

And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought... Isaiah 58:11

Going to college is an important decision in the lives of most graduating high school seniors. In many ways it is a significant transitional point. The frightening move is from the dependence on parents to the independence of young adulthood. My experience has been no different. I have already been faced with the responsibilities, privileges and consequences of independence, or as many young adults call it, "FREEDOM!" I am almost certain that, as my Oakwood journey continues, I am in a place where I can allow God to direct my path. If there is anywhere that can prepare one for life, Oakwood is that place.

What many students on their way to college fail to recognize is how much responsibility and power are in their hands. This lack of knowledge, in turn, sometimes brings about bad decisions. I knew that a lot of responsibility was placed in my hands; however, I did not realize how much. I have made bad decisions since I have been here, but, since I am no longer under my parents' "wing," I have had to correct them all. No experience has taken place from which I have not learned a lesson. "Freedom isn't all that it is said to be."

Here, at Oakwood, I have also enjoyed the privileges brought about by the responsibility of adulthood. I make my decisions. If I choose to go out with friends, I do not have to get the permission of my parents; I just go. I decide whether to spend time or money wisely, or not so wisely. The important thing to remember is that all decisions come with consequences, good or bad: the decision whether or not to

eat properly, to do assignments when they are due, to go or not to go to classes. What are the consequences of the decisions I make? Whom do they affect?

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions! I must say from the start that most decisions college students make affect them directly. For instance, if I decide to spend my time wisely, I can get many things accomplished, thereby keeping up with the pace of college. However, if I decide not to do that, bad grades, falling behind, and other consequences follow. What if I do not want to eat a nutritious and balanced meal? Well, bad health will result; thus, I will miss classes, fall behind once again, and get bad grades. Bad decisions can result in bad consequences, but good ones keep one ahead.

Most of the knowledge I have now resulted from the responsibility I have assumed at Oakwood. My Oakwood Experience has been enriching, informative and fun-filled. No, I did not forget about dependence on God, nor did I look to Him only for answers. Oakwood will produce shining stars; however, the stars only shine because they get their energy from the one true light source, the Son. This being the case, I trust that while at Oakwood I will grow spiritually, mentally, and physically as I continue to depend upon my energy source - Jesus, and utilize the resources available to me.

Danielle Martin

Worship Experience

*"...worship and bow down let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.
Psalm 95:6 (RSV)*

"Make sure you go to Oakwood," was what I always heard. "You'll never forget that Oakwood Experience." What is this Experience that everyone is talking about? Why should everyone have it? When I said that I might go to Andrews University, many people came to me and told me that I should get my Oakwood Experience first and then whatever I do after that does not matter. So many people held this point of view that I decided to see what this Experience was all about.

When I first stepped on campus, I must admit that I was pretty frightened. Everywhere I went people spoke to me. I could not pass anyone without them saying "Hi" or "What's up." I passed it off as a "Southern thing." They just like to talk. I met someone in every regis-

tration line that I was in. Even the cafeteria attendants asked how I was doing before they served the food. Speaking of the cafeteria; that was an experience! I thank the Lord that I have experienced Oakwood. The highlight of any Oakwood experience, however, was the worship service. You realize that God expects you to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

My first worship service was a beautiful experience. I heard singing such as I had never heard before, and I just thanked the Lord that He broke a little pinch of heaven and sprinkled it on us in that service. Oakwood has an unusually high spiritual atmosphere. The students thrive on being closer to God, striving to live in a manner that He would approve. God becomes real in a personal way.

The classes at Oakwood are well taught, and the teachers care about the students. Friendships that will last for a lifetime are often formed. Now I am starting to understand what people mean when they say, "Make sure you get the Oakwood Experience." It is an experience that has changed my life forever, and I would encourage others to share it.

Brian Johnson

Take It or Leave It

...choose you this day whom ye will serve... Joshua 24:15

Growing up in an African American Adventist church, one often hears the phrase, "The Oakwood Experience." Needless to say, I became curious. My friends and I often spoke about attending Oakwood together, even when we were in junior high school. When high school time came around, however, we had all changed our minds. For me though, attending Oakwood's College Days was the determining factor for my decision to enroll here. I discovered that California and Alabama are as different as night and day, yet, I knew that there were many lessons for me to learn and I could take it or leave it.

Surely, there is a spiritual atmosphere on campus, one of the many things that one will experience, whether an on or off campus student. Oakwood is known for its love of music. I experienced that on my first Friday night here at AYS. What I was accustomed to hearing in a choir was what I was listening to in that song service. When we all sang "How Excellent is Thy Name," that was exactly what was going through my mind. The voices sounded angelic. Then, I realized that people are willing to spread the gospel. There are also many that are

willing to pray with you.

Anyone at Oakwood can have an enjoyable experience, if the person is willing to make certain adjustments. One thing is sure. For the most part, the people are friendly. If you have your mind set on making your stay at Oakwood a memorable experience, it will be. To a great extent your success at Oakwood all depends on you and your attitude. Take it or leave it.

Halecia Griffiths

My First Oakwood Experience

Is any thing too hard for the Lord?... Genesis 18:14

My Oakwood experience was rather interesting. When I first arrived on campus, one of the navigators greeted me and helped me with my bags. I moved all my things into one room, which turned out to be the wrong one. I was tired and sweaty from a long, tiring flight, yet I could not rest.

The campus was alive: freshmen and their parents were everywhere. I was intimidated because I was going through the registration process alone. My parents had to work, so they were unable to be with me. I felt like a child who had left his parents for the first time to go into first grade. I felt like calling my parents to come and pick me up. I did not like Oakwood any more. I only knew one person on campus, my cousin Judith, who was working in the Financial Aid office. She could not even take the time to show me around because it was orientation and she had to work. I barely participated in the orientation programs, spending most of the time in my room. It was not until I went to my first class that I felt that I really belonged here. Then somehow I felt spiritually uplifted and blessed.

I can truly say, had it not been for Oakwood's spirituality, my life would be less productive today. Now, I realize that my life ought to be satisfying to God, for He makes the difference. He comforts and protects. He guides and provides, and there is nothing too hard for Him. So trust Him always.

Jacqueline Mondestin

College Dreams

...go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee... Mark 5:19

Finally, I was headed to the place that had been ringing through my ears for years: Oakwood College. I understood I should attend that college because the vision in my mind grew more vivid each day. Yet, I fantasized about wild parties, with music filling the air enticing me to dance, and cancerous smoke from the tips of cigarette butts.

The warm sun rays soaked deep into my chest adding to the joyful feeling that I was previously experiencing as my vehicle turned right off Sparkman Drive. Immediately as I entered the campus my mood quickly changed. Seemingly, the campus was extremely small; I questioned whether or not I was at the correct school. Pressing my face against the car window, I frantically searched around for a clue to solve the mysteries swirling about in my head. But I found none.

The next factor that took my attention was the friendly people on the campus. Before moving into Peterson Hall, I was greeted by a number of the new students with smiling faces and extended hands signaling a handshake. I considered that a blessing and my liking for the school gradually began to increase. The final experience that totally swept me off my feet was the religious atmosphere of the college. An abundance of spiritual blessings could be received at prayer meetings, Weeks of Prayer, vespers, and church services. I could not believe that a college, especially Oakwood, was so enriched with the Spirit of God.

The college has helped me to grow and understand life while adapting to its changes. Although small, Oakwood has a wonderful atmosphere in which your spiritual relationship can grow and develop. Friendly students and faculty are ever present. The whole Oakwood experience has been for me a pleasant surprise. When I go home for Christmas I will encourage my friends to go to Oakwood, because I have already received a rich blessing and I am happy for my Oakwood Experience.

Reuben Steele

God's Other Plan

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Psalms 32:8

There was once a time in my life when I did not know which college I would attend. I considered every college except Oakwood. There was no way I planned to enroll there. My mind was made up. However, God had different plans for me. He wanted me to take part in the Oakwood Experience. As a result of His plan for my life, I ended up at Oakwood August 17, 1997. It was my time to take part in the events of this beautiful campus. My experience as a freshman began.

My parents drove me to Huntsville early Sunday morning. My feelings were somewhat mixed. I did not know what to expect. I could not eat because of my nervous anxiety. When we reached the campus, my fears decreased and a new excitement took hold. I could not believe I was really here at Oakwood College. My parents left the next day, leaving me here to be the young adult lady they had trained me to be. I was officially on my own. Now, it was time to make my own decisions, develop new friendships, and most of all, further my education. I knew I was ready for the challenges that lay ahead of me because although my parents were gone, God was still with me.

I had no problem meeting people. There were so many freshmen. It was hard to believe. My roommate and I instantly hit it off, and we immediately considered ourselves friends. As the week progressed, I learned more about the campus and met many more people. I was very satisfied with the choice God had made for me. He knew exactly what was best for me. The next week came, and it was time for classes to start. I was very excited. My brain was prepared to absorb the information I would receive from my professors. Classes followed through very well and I knew instantly that I would have a good year. The only adjustment I would have to make was getting up early on my own without my mother's help.

My first weeks here at Oakwood's campus were just what I expected them to be. I enjoyed my new life. The only difficulty I had was my stomach adapting to the cafeteria cuisine. Other than that, I had no complaints. The first few weeks of my freshman year were definitely one of the best things I will ever experience. I would strongly recommend that anyone looking for a positive spiritual, social and educational background look no further than the campus of Oakwood College.

Shawanna Taylor

My Oakwood College Experience

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

It is amazing how the Lord works in an individual's life to bring him to the mercy seat. The Lord had to humble me, making me, realize that I have no strength or any great thing in myself. Once I was humbled, He was able to start the wonderful processing of restoring and molding a character that reflects His glory. Oakwood College became the manufacturing plant that worked hand-in-hand with the Lord to build and refine a God-like character within me and give me a better life.

Like a piece of ore, I had to be removed from my place of comfort and familiarity in order to experience a more excellent light. Broken and filled with impurities, the skilled miner, Jesus, took me out of darkness and showed me the light. The transition was scary, but at the same time thrilling. All my life I had been acquainted with darkness, and even though I had given my life to Jesus, there was still a part of me that wanted to remain in my sinful condition. But my desire to experience the warmth and love of God became the foundation of my faith in Jesus to carry me through this tunnel of darkness. As the light became brighter and brighter with each successive step, I experienced renewed hope, and strength filled my soul. Fragments of dirt and filth were brushed off, and I was able to absorb more light. At the mouth of the tunnel, I had to make a choice, either to go back to the darkness of my familiarities or take a step of faith into the light for which I was destined.

My decision to follow the Lord all the way was just the beginning of my lifelong journey to obtain the character that reflected God. Jesus now had to put me through the process of refining, which is an environment that applies God-like stress. This kind of stress shook the very foundation of my soul and caused me to inspect the weak links that were hindering the growth of God's Spirit. Oakwood College became the refining plant that applied truth after truth that went against every philosophy of the world and most ideologies with which I was acquainted.

Through Oakwood College, my spectrum of life widened with every understanding that came from above. I was no longer blinded by the darkness of my former environment, for my spiritual pupils were

open to receive spiritual truth. The teachers and students provided a spiritual environment and witnessed to me of the love of God. You see, Oakwood College by itself is an institution filled with nothing else but buildings and open land. If it were not for the spirit-filled souls that reflect God's love, this college would not have been such an influential and inspirational environment for me. Oakwood has provided me with a better life.

Adrian Chen

Tornado Meditation

Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isaiah 41:10

I will never forget the night of the Huntsville tornado. It was the first time I had ever been in the midst of a natural disaster. I have lived in Canada almost all my life, and the major weather systems that we get there are blizzards. When I first heard of the tornado, I told myself that it was not true; then I got scared. Finally, I was assured that God would be with the Oakwood campus. It sometimes takes a catastrophe to build up one's faith in God.

When I heard the tornado warning, I tried to tell myself that there was no tornado heading for us and I continued with my laundry. I heard a strange noise, which sounded like an emergency siren. Almost as suddenly, the resident assistant came on the intercom and said frantically, "All ladies of Carter Hall, please report to the basement now." Then I realized this thing was real. All sorts of negative thoughts started going through my head, "What if all my stuff is blown away? Everything I own is in my room. Worst yet, what if I get caught in the tornado, am I ready to die?"

Will I be ready to go to heaven if I die in the next five minutes? I seemed to be the only one who was scared, and then I heard the story that made me rest assured.

Out of the one hundred and one years that Oakwood has been standing, it has never been hit by a tornado, while many other buildings around have been flattened. It is because of God's goodness and mercy that He has spared His school from any kind of destruction. Once I heard this, I prayed and all my fear was cast into the bottom of the

deepest sea. I knew that the Lord would be faithful and just and would spare His school and His children once again.

That one incident strengthened my faith in God. I know He will protect me. If I were not here at Oakwood, an incident like this one would not have empowered my faith as this tornado did. It even turned out to be just a minor tornado. It is amazing how such a little thing can make such a big change in someone's life.

Sherine Daley

An Inspirational Journey

*...repent and be baptized... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
For the promise is unto you. Acts 2:38, 39*

As a freshman at Oakwood College, I always enjoy the opportunity to share my Oakwood Experience. During my first academic school year at this institution, I experienced good moments as well as bad ones. However, I have had one particular event in my Oakwood Experience I wish to always remember.

From the very first day of last summer when I arrived on this campus, I was amazed to see, for the first time in my entire life, many young black males and females who truly loved the Lord and were devoted to serving Him. Two weeks earlier, I had opened a new page in my history by being baptized for the second time. To tell you the truth, I was not born a Seventh-day Adventist. I had joined the church only three years before. If people ask why did I decide to get re-baptized, I would tell them that the impressions and the atmosphere here on this campus made me realize that God is not what I used to think He was. I now realize that I must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. My whole view of Christianity changed. By listening to other young people of my age, I became convinced that if I was representing God, I should be perfect, as He is perfect.

Indeed, I can say, I am not the same person I was when I came to Orientation. Like the apostle Paul, I can say that I am no more what I used to be, and I would never take for granted the experience of my re-baptism. Furthermore, I place it in my history as a new step on my journey to the kingdom.

Milton Fermine

Outreach

*...and ye shall be witnesses unto me... unto the uttermost parts
of the earth. Acts 1:8*

It was a Tuesday morning in an African American history class. Glancing at my watch, I realized it was eight forty-five a.m., and I eagerly looked forward to chapel. Here at Oakwood College, I have learned to depend on God more. As a result, my spiritual life has been strengthened. Involvement in the College Choir, in outreach programs and in a deeper personal relationship with God, has impacted my life in a positive way.

Praising God through music has been an inspiration and a blessing to me. I have been a part of the Oakwood Choir for the last two years and I have enjoyed it immensely. I consider it a privilege to be a part of a choir that has been in existence for some forty-six years. Our frequent travels provided the perfect opportunity to spread God's love to the world. Appearances on PBS in Alabama and *Good Morning, America* were just the beginning of a wonderful ministry for the Lord. Just recently, we made a trip to Philadelphia to sing. While there, we had a chance to minister to the people and their spiritual needs. As a result, eight persons gave their hearts to the Lord.

Another activity that spiritually encouraged me was outreach. The college offers many different programs in which students may become involved. Some Friday evenings you would find me at a hospital singing and giving encouragement to those who are ill. We take for granted life, good health, and strength, but seeing people lying in the hospital reminded me to thank God for His blessings. Other activities I took part in included handing out literature and doing children's programs in the community. Singing songs, telling stories, or just giving a hug to a small child in need strengthened my own spiritual growth.

My personal relationship with God is special. Talking to Him one on One and knowing that He really cares about me as an individual means much to me. In addition, through personal devotion I have grown in Christ. Each day I ask for His guidance and protection. Each day I strive to be like Him. Each day I try to make a positive impact on someone's life by letting him or her know through my actions that Christ dwells in me. So, I depend on God to help me through each day.

In short, I could have attended another college, but instead I chose Oakwood. The college's outreach and spiritual atmosphere have kept me focused on my aspirations. When you are choosing a college to attend, keep in mind the discipline, as well as spiritual stability, for these are beneficial to success in life.

Russell M. Fields

Intervention at the Intersection

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

Psalm 34:19-20

This verse and many others became my pillow of comfort and encouragement during my two years of recuperation. Thank You, Jesus, for your intervention at the intersection.

Shoes off, seat back, I lounged restfully in my car, parked on the ground of an old, quiet building that was once a shopping mall, I looked at my watch and thought, I have twenty minutes left before my lunch break is over. Speaking out aloud I said to myself, "Well, I guess I'll go back to work early." Work was only a two-minute drive away. As I came up the steep ramp of the mall to the traffic lights, I waited for the lights to change to green. When the lights finally changed to green, I mumbled again to myself, "Just wait a second to let those crazy folks who like to run the red light do so." After hesitating for a new seconds, I advanced out into the road turning my steering wheel southward. Before completing the turn, BANG! CRASH! I felt my car being thrust out of control northward before stopping itself. Without warning, a car had crashed into my side, the driver's door. Even though I had allowed time for someone to run the red light, the unknown and unforeseen happened. Help came immediately, including a police officer in an unmarked car. He saw me off to the hospital promptly. I did not experience any pain until three days later.

Day after day, night after night, my body was ravaged with pain. I could not find a comfortable position sitting or lying to relieve my pain-filled body. Crying made the pain worse and any medication only masked my agony. The side effects of the medication raised my blood pressure, increased my weight, and affected my thinking negatively. The injury was causing me to experience episodes of dizziness. "Lord,

PLEASE help me!" I often prayed out aloud.

One troubled morning, as I lay on my bed in the midst of my medicated, confused mind, a still gentle voice said to me, "Stop taking all those medications." That day and thereafter I decided not to take any more of my medication. I could think more clearly within a few days, and my blood pressure lowered to normal range. Although, the pain and dizziness were still there, I learned to lean on God for healing, strength and guidance. I decided to telephone a few God-fearing, prayer-believing friends, asking them to come to my home together to pray with me for peace, healing and wisdom to deal with my treatment. This prayer session took place and what a blessing it was. From then on, I felt at peace, and the burdens lifted from my body. The power of prayer is incredible and workable today! From then on also, I was able to plan and direct my methods of treatment. The road to recovery was long, but bearable, with God beside me.

Instead of making it back to work in two minutes, I made it back two years later after going through various therapies and finally neck surgery. The question I was asked so often within my two years of recuperation was "Are you angry?" My reply each time was "No, I am just happy to be alive." This experience has caused me to really realize that life is extremely short, and most uncertain. Life should not be spent in constant stress, living on the job with long working hours, less family time, and being too tired for God. It does not matter who you are, what profession you are in, or what good deeds you have done; no one is excluded from the dangers of this world. One surety that we do have is that God can save us all.

Readers, we must do all that we can to be ready for Him. In preparing, we may come across some unhappy moments, painful situations, and feelings of hopelessness. When we think we are doing the right thing and all is safe, BANG! CRASH! Let us steer our lives daily in His direction. Let us allow Him to lead and guide, then your life and mine will become rich and beautiful for His glory.

Christina E. Thomas

A Step Outside...and Into the Walk of Faith

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

JoyNotes! ♪♪

During the month of June 1998, I attended a crusade. While attending this crusade, I learned the truth about the Sabbath and was baptized shortly thereafter. After learning the truth, I notified my job two and a half weeks in advance. I stated that I would no longer be able to work on Saturdays, on account of my religious beliefs. My employer disregarded my proclamation and continued to schedule me to work on Saturdays.

The two and a half-week deadline arrived, and I did not show for work. Instead, I was visiting a Korean Seventh-day Adventist church in Westmont, Illinois. The following day that I was scheduled for work (Monday), I arrived at my given time. My boss called me into his office and informed me that I had caused a great deal of inconvenience to the rest of my co-workers, due to my not showing up for work on Saturday. He then proceeded to inform me that because of this incident I had agreed to become a part-time employee and lose my full-time employee benefits. (Part-time employees labor two days out of the week, and a couple of hours every two days.) He persisted to schedule me every day of the week, including Saturdays, excluding one hour. This way, they were able to legally say that I was part-time.

After several different occurrences, indicating to me that they desired to relieve me of my position, I found myself terminated from my job. Why? For honoring my Father's commandments. The same day of termination from my job, I took a step outside my comfort zone and into the walk of faith with God.

I made a few phone calls, packed up as many materials as I could get into my car, and departed for Huntsville, Alabama. The day following my termination, I stepped onto the campus of Oakwood. In one day I did what people have taken months to accomplish. I knew that my success came only by the grace of God, and my testimony is, what hath God wrought!

Sarah Doepke

Evening Praises

Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul. While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

Psalm 146:1, 2

"Eating in the café is my joy; but washing dishes for the café is sheer drudgery. I do not like it," said the quiet sophomore to this classmate, Hope.

"Why don't you like it?" asked Hope.

JoyNotes! 🎵

"Because that is not what I like to do," Ray spoke out quickly. "What would you like to do, then?" Hope continued persistently.

"The major I plan to take is English and Communications, since I want to work at a radio station."

"So why are you washing dishes and not practicing to host a radio program? Did you ever think that you could approach the manager of WOCG and check out the opportunities he has?"

The query about an opportunity was providential. The radio station manager, Don McPhaul, in 1982 originated and named one of his programs "Evening Praises", to match the slot "Morning Joy". David Persons first worked that evening program. Now, an opportunity presented itself. An immediate opening appeared in the evening slot and Ray gladly consented to take it. His decision was final. He started working. In this two-hour evening slot, Evening Praises, Ray encouraged his listening audience to give more praise to our loving God.

As the theme played, you heard the distinct voice of Ray Leftridge, "Christian radio for today's Christian family. We are 90.1 FM, WOCG, Huntsville, Alabama, your station for excellence in Christian broadcasting." He continued, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, while I live I will yet praise Thee." He announced the time and continued, "I am Ray Leftridge, host of your program Evening Praises. Sit back and listen to beautiful, Christian music."

"I miss my time with you," "When you pray everything will be all right," or the dedication to the senior class, "I have come too far to turn back now," were some of the songs you would hear. Two hours slipped by, and the voice could be heard again, "We can shout the praise of the Father each and every day, singing praises unto God for His leading and guidance."

Ever since that time I first listened to Evening Praises, I decided to focus more on praise, and I invite you reader to do the same. As Ray would say, "Sing praises to God. Praise Him through singing, actions, lifestyle and different ways. As you trust God and rely upon His goodness, He will make a way through your storm by His love and power."

Anonymous

Saved by a Guardian Angel

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Psalms 34:7 NIV

As a little boy, growing up in the small Central American country of Panama, I enjoyed exploring old abandoned buildings. There were always interesting artifacts waiting to be rescued from destitute places. From these I would create ingenious toys.

Back in those days we did not have Toys-R-Us stores with their dizzying inventory of toys for children. And, even if they had been around, my parents would not have wasted their limited resources on such dispensable objects. So I learned to make my own toys. I clearly remember how gratifying it was to play with the products of my own creativity. Not for one moment did I consider myself a disadvantaged child.

Panama is perhaps most famous for the large transoceanic canal built early in this century by the United States to connect the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean. This place is also known as a botanical and zoological paradise. Its tropical climate spawns impenetrable forests, exuberant vegetation, and a large variety of animals, insects, birds, and reptiles, many of which are extremely poisonous. The heavy rainfall and equatorial heat combine to produce high humidity. In such an environment abandoned buildings deteriorate quickly.

I learned early in life that even apparently useless structures often hide diamonds in the rough. It only takes a little energy, initiative, and creativity to collect them and transform them into things of usefulness and beauty.

I must have been about six years old when it happened. I had set out along a familiar road. About a mile from my house on that road was an old abandoned house. It had been unoccupied for so long that tall weeds and grass had enveloped it. I had walked by that old house many times before; in fact, I had played with my friends on the property adjacent to it several times. It sat on the top of a hill, which ran down to the edge of a beautiful lake. On that day I decided to seek for whatever treasure might be hidden inside that house.

I walked up the creaky, unstable steps right to the threshold of the front door, which was open. I was alone. Or so I thought. I peered into the darkness of the living room, waiting for my pupils to adjust so I could decide where to go first. It was so dark. I could not see anything. Suddenly, I felt an overpowering urge to jump straight into the air. I jumped as high as I could with my legs tucked tightly to my body. And just at the moment that I jumped I saw a long, dark cylindrical form strike through the very space that my legs and feet had vacated. It made a loud noise as it crashed into the wall on the left side of the doorframe. I immediately spun around and ran down the steps and away from the house.

What had happened? There was a large snake, probably resting on the floor of that dark room that I could not see when I reached the threshold of the door. My noisy footfalls had alerted it and it had prepared itself to attack the intruder.

What made me leap into the air so suddenly when I had not seen or heard anything that advertised the presence of a deadly killer in that room? I believe that on that day I was saved by my guardian angel. For what purpose?

Over the years I have reflected on this experience many times. My heart sings with gratitude to my God for His marvelous protection over that curious little boy, a long time ago. I praise Him for His goodness. I praise Him for His faithfulness. I reaffirm my commitment to serve Him by grace, until Jesus comes again.

I know that my guardian angel's dramatic intervention in my young life must have been for a divine purpose. This thought energizes my daily witness for my Lord on the Oakwood College campus. It motivates me to urge my students to "taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm 34:8.

Roland McKenzie

Light of the Tennessee Valley

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is come upon thee. Isaiah 60:1

Twenty years ago, a light began to burn brightly from the outskirts of the Oakwood College campus. Technology was claimed in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Light, lifted to a near fifty-mile radius, has touched the lives of so many living in darkness.

I was privileged to begin my student work at WOCG in 1984, under the tutelage of Elder Donald McPhaul. He would single-handedly juggle his duties as full-time general manager, theology student, husband and father, and we watched as he did them well. His influence and example have helped me whenever I feel overwhelmed even with a staff of five. The Lord has brought us so far throughout our twenty-year history. I could regale you with management stories and various crisis periods in our history, but I would prefer to tell you how WOCG has been a light to so many.

A short while after working as a professional at WOCG, I spied a newsletter generated by the Amazing Facts Broadcast. I quickly

paged through it. Flipping it over to the back, I noticed the listener comments. As I scanned through the first few pages, our call letters WOCG caught my eye and I read comments from our own listeners. They spoke highly of the Amazing Facts program and said that they listened to the program on the radio station WOCG in Huntsville. Most importantly, they were happy to announce that they had been led to the gospel message by listening to the program on WOCG. Tears still spring to my eyes as I write these thoughts. Hallelujah – Praise Our Great God! Our work is not in vain. If but one lost soul can find the light of salvation, then the struggles and petty day-to-day stresses are WORTH IT!

In another instance, I would often see a lovely lady each week at church. She was always ready with a quick smile serving on the hospitality committee and greeting people at the doors of the church on Sabbath mornings. One Sabbath afternoon as we were chatting casually in the hall she said, “You know I am here because of WOCG. I came into the church because of a series that ran on your station a few years ago.” Praise the Lord! The Light shines forth.

In 1997, WOCG began re-broadcasting our signal on the Internet via RealAudio. I have received e-mail from all over the world. The Light is burning brightly into all the world! What a privilege it is to be part of this ministry! What a privilege it is to train others to take their abilities into the field – to be lights in their corner of the world. What a challenge we have here at Oakwood College at such a time as this!

“And if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me...” “I am the Light of the world...”

Victoria L. Miller

Jumping off the Deep End

...and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Matthew 14:30-31

Ask any student who has ever had a full load of college courses and he or she will likely admit that amid the academic struggle, it helps every now and then to be able to find a “fun and easy” class or two. Many would think this term could be applied to Physical Education courses. Those people apparently did not have Dr. L. Carter as a professor. She believed in encouraging students to reach their full poten-

JoyNotes! ♪♪

tial in the use of every muscle, tendon, and ligament. She also believed in making sure her students left each course with skills not present prior to having taken the course. Such was the case with Beginner's Swimming 101.

When this college freshman enrolled, I was unaware of Dr. Carter's dedication to fitness. I was relying on my high school phys-ed experiences, you know, like learning to dribble a basketball, playing volleyball and the death defying act of walking a balance beam one foot off the ground and surrounded by padded mats. I did not realize that my professor was as serious about teaching those in my class to swim as an Olympic trainer is about seeing a prodigy come home with gold. After all, I thought, how difficult could a class for beginners be? The first few days of class, we merely looked at the pool and sat through lectures on water safety and the basics of swimming. Next, we got suited up and began learning swimming motions while standing in the shallow end of the pool. "This is going to be a cinch," I thought. "The easiest "A" I would ever receive."

A few weeks into the course, we were being asked to swim as far across the shallow end of the pool as we could. Now I began to think, maybe this course was more than I had bargained for. "What? She's expecting me to actually swim?" I watched my fellow classmates making their way across the pool with varying degrees of difficulty, but none with as great a measure of ineptitude as I. Some actually sailed across the length of the pool like dolphins, making my clumsy, frantic, thrashing movements look like those of a broken propeller. My only salvation was that every time I really began to sink, which was about every two wild strokes, I would touch the bottom of the pool with my big toe and push my body afloat. Yes, I was faking it. Lucky for me, there were just enough other students in the pool to keep Dr. Carter busy enough not to notice. If I could manage to keep up the façade for few more weeks, I might actually pass this course...so I thought. Doesn't this strikingly resemble the way we think in our Christian walk from time to time?

Well, just as I began to grow comfortable with the idea, Dr. Carter snatched the life preserver from beneath me with this announcement. "As part of your final exam, in order to pass this course, each student will have to jump off the deep end and swim across." The statement struck horror to the depths of my very soul. I scanned the room to see if there were any signs of panic on any of my classmates' faces. If so, certainly this would be ground to protest such requirements. But, alas, I was alone in my despair. It seemed that everyone else had actually learned to swim. What was I to do? I would surely die! Was it too late to drop the class? My mind raced. If I dropped the

class now, it was too late to get my money back. My parents would hunt me down for having wasted their hard-earned money. I decided I would rather take my chances in the deep end. Finally, the day of decision arrived – the final exam. A few students joked, “If we drown, will we flunk the class?” I was too frightened to laugh.

Perhaps I could be last and gather enough courage by the end to survive- wrong. The exam went alphabetically. “Anderson, are you ready?” What kind of question was that? Of course, I was not ready to die. As a minor consolation, Dr. Carter held a long aluminum hook. If she saw anyone in trouble she would reach out from the side of the pool and drag the person to safety. The trouble was that if she wound up having to save you, you failed. Doesn’t that sound like somewhat of a contradiction? Anyway, I slowly walked to the edge of the pool. I looked down into the deep, cold abyss. Not wanting to prolong the agony, I jumped off. Down I went...praying a prayer of repentance.

Somehow, I made my way back up and struggled to tread water for a moment or two, as required. In an obvious panic, I attempted to level my body and begin my so-called strokes. I noticed Dr. Carter poised with the hook. She must have detected my impending doom because she began extending the hook in my direction. “C’mon Linda. You can do it.” My fellow students cheered me on. Somewhere between the paralyzing fear of drowning and the deep desire to make it to the other side...to make the grade, I began to actually swim. Certainly it was not a graceful water dance, but I was swimming. I swam well enough to escape the hook and make it to the other side. As I reached out and clutched the edge of the pool, there was applause. God had heard and answered my prayer, “Lord, save me!” NO, I did not get an ‘A’. I didn’t get a gold medal. But, I made it.

Sometimes God gives us just enough to make it. As I reflect on this experience, I know just how Peter must have felt with the waves splashing all around him, the water deep beneath him. To sink now in front of all his classmates, with help only a few feet away would have been an embarrassment to say the least. In our Christian experience, in order to gain faith, sometimes, we have to just jump into the deep and take a crash course in learning to rely on Christ. He wants us to know he will never ever let us drown. He is right there in front of us wanting to pull us to safety. The song says,

“I was sinking deep in sin,
Far from the peaceful shore,
But the master of the sea
Heard my despairing cry...
Then love lifted me.”

Believe it reader, Christ is always willing to pull you up from the deep. That is why we call Him our Savior.

Linda Anderson

Standing on the Promises

*Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou
confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame...*

Isaiah 54:4

The mailman brought an overseas letter. I opened it and it read: "You know you have no money and I am not able to help. You are just going to expose and embarrass yourself by sending them to Oakwood..."

I was disappointed. There were no words of encouragement, commendation, or hope. As I reread the messages, I focused on "expose and embarrass yourself," and I froze. Here I was trying to place two children in our school system and being confronted with in-house obstacles. What was I to do?

Somehow, I took my Bible and began reading about Hezekiah's predicament. Rabshakeh had sent him a very rude message (see 2 Kings 18:26, 27; Isaiah 36:12-20). I noted Hezekiah's reaction. He did not know what to do. So, he went up to the temple, spread the letter out before the Lord and prayed. The Lord answered and gave him an outstanding victory.

Well, I thought maybe God would do the same for us, as well. So, there in the privacy of my secret place I laid my letter out before the Lord, and prayed too.

"Father, you know the situation. I have no one to turn to but you. You have said Your children should be taught in your schools. I am only trying to follow Your command. Let me not be ashamed nor confounded in front of those who are watching for our failure. Show me how to make this move, and work it out according to Your will. Lord, I depend on You. I am standing on Your promise, which You will never break. Fulfill this one to your believing child. Thanks for hearing and answering my prayers. Amen."

Did God hear and provide an answer? How did He work it out? He sent a scholarship and promise of roommates in an unforgettable dream sometime before. He also made special provision for the daughter

who applied a month later. God had a plan and made "a way out of no way" even though we had no money. In His provision, both girls were able to attend Oakwood, and through test and trial they remained there for four years until graduation. They completed Oakwood with a credit balance.

God kept His promise. "Thou shalt not be ashamed nor confounded." That was the promise I stood upon, and saw doors open for me and mine. Yes, God has done it before. He is doing it now. He has the habit of giving surprises to those who believe. He will do it again for me and for any of His children. He will do it for you too. How? you ask. His promises He never breaks. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Child of God, just stand on your Father's Promises; He will come through for you, too.

Cecily Daly

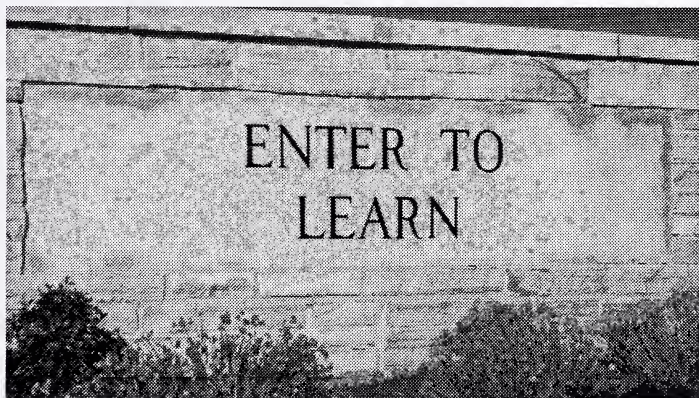
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The Academic Experience

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The Principal Thing

Wisdom is the principal thing;

therefore get wisdom: and with all

thy getting get understanding.

Exalt her, and she shall promote thee:

She shall bring thee to honour,

when thou dost embrace her.

Take fast hold of instruction;

Let her not go:

Keep her; for she is thy life.

Proverbs 4: 7, 8, 13

My Testimony

Protons, neutrons, molecules, atoms—
All the building blocks of life one can fathom.
Water, carbon, acids and organelles.
The professor made sure we knew them well.
Day after day, more and more we learned
About a cell from membrane to core.
And throughout the lesson she incorporated the Word.
Yes, at Oakwood the truth we heard.
How God is great and we know it not.
This truth we heard about the origin of the world,
And how God's whole glorious plan unfolds.
So I studied diligently for the best.
And on exam day I gave my all not just for me,
but for my Heavenly Father on whom I call.
When the grades came I realized the truth.
I claimed God's promises and got a 92!

Samara Ryce

*Behold, God is great, and we know Him not...
Great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.
Job 36:26; 37:5*

A Full-Fledged Oakwoodite

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matt. 6:33

Arriving at Oakwood College at the end of the summer was my dream come true. After all those years of visiting the campus for campmeetings, I was finally at Oakwood College as a student. As a freshman, I was on the lowest rung of the collegiate totem pole; my objective while here however, was to ascend this totem pole and become a first class representative of the Afro-American culture and Seventh-day Adventist Christianity. I had become an Oakwoodite; but, would I be able to overcome my loneliness, my fear of the unknown, and still find time for God? That was the question.

After my mother left me to pursue my college career, I was immediately plagued by loneliness. Being away from home was nothing new to me, for I had just finished four years of boarding school. At the boarding school I at least knew a few people when school started. Things were totally different here at Oakwood. I did not know a single person and it seemed like I was the only person who did not have a group with whom to hangout. Then I came to the conclusion, "Joe, this is college. You are out of your high school comfort zone. It is time to mix with the real world. This time make new friends." So I did.

My new friends were just that. They were new to me and to the college experience. They did not have any advice for me on how to succeed scholastically in college, and this lack of knowledge on how to succeed terrified me. College, after all was the real thing; success in college could determine whether I would live with my mom for the rest of my life, or whether I could eventually buy a house and invite my mom to come and live with me. Academic success was a must. So I decided that obtaining an education was the point I desperately needed to reach. I had to give it my all. Yes!!! My best shot.

My most pressing issue while in college was the experience of keeping my relationship with God in tact. College work, with all its deadlines could put a strain on any relationship. Mine with God was no different. To preserve and nurture a strong friendship with God I needed to always make time for Him, no matter how many tests or assignments I had. Time with God needed to be of quality and not only quantity. So I needed to set aside my mornings to praise and glorify His name. This time I called "God's Time."

Freshman year at college was not easy, but then nothing worth having is ever easily obtained, except through much prayer and close

ties with God. Reaching my goals was not through my efforts alone, but through the grace of God, I became a full-fledged successful Oakwoodite.

Joseph Thompson

The History Lesson

When you love God you will gain insight ...and will know what course to take. Proverbs 2:9 (the Clear Word)

It was fall 1995, my junior year at Oakwood College and the class was Denominational History. I have always enjoyed history classes so when I found out that I had to take this class I was excited, but scared. Yet, I was confident that whatever was placed in front of me I could do.

Two weeks went by quickly and it was time for my first test. I had studied very hard for this test, and I really felt ready. Question number one, oh, this was easy, then number two, three, and so on. The test was great, so far. I knew what I was doing and was happy, then came number ten. Oh my! It was something I had not studied, but I guessed. Then I started to lose my confidence and began to panic; soon I realized that I had more mistakes as I tried to finish the test. I walked outside. Now I really felt that I had failed the test. I began to cry. Then, I realized I had done my best. The Lord knew how hard I worked and I knew He would bless me. A week later the results came back. I had passed my first test. As the semester went by, I would take more tests and nothing special seemed to happen; things seemed to be getting worse. Three times I studied and when the time came for the test, nothing would come to my remembrance. At mid-term, my average grade was a C- and I needed a C or better to pass the class, I began to get nervous about my not passing the course, but the Lord was on my side and He was in control.

Now, it was time for finals, and it was also time to remember everything that I had studied during the semester. There were thirty-two chapters that we had focused on. I began to study and review the material so that I could at least pass with a "C" and get out of that class. The day for the final exam came, and I went to class and wrote the exam. The instructor said, "Come see your grade," and if you are content with your grade you don't have to take the final." I was so

scared to find out, so when he called me I went up to find out the grade and I had a C. I cried and thanked God for helping me pass the class, and to this day I thank God for all that He has done for me.

The history lesson taught me not only to work hard but also to trust fully in the Lord. Why not try trusting in Him fully for help in your work, too?

Yonelle Cush

One Hundred Percent

Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Psalm 73:24

Coming to Oakwood was probably one of the most difficult decisions that I have had to make. I really did not want to attend nor had I any thoughts about attending school here. But arrive, I did! So I made up my mind to use the opportunity to my advantage and do my best. When classes began the first day, I was very excited to meet new faces and discover all kinds of people with the same kind of attitude I had about attending Oakwood. I soon came to discover that Oakwood was a good institution after all. I just had to get adjusted to the environment, the atmosphere and the challenges.

As the semester progressed, one of the things I discovered was that I had begun to like Oakwood. It was like a family network that hung together and always protected each other's back, no matter the circumstances. I could not believe that I was really enjoying myself this much at Oakwood College. The people here were so friendly that it was impossible not to have at least two or three good friends. Most important, there were people who loved the Lord, and who gave Him all the glory for being in school for a whole year. Whenever it came time to give God praise, the students at Oakwood would express themselves in such a manner that you knew the Holy Spirit was a part of this school.

Furthermore, I found out that I had to study. This was not a school that I could just skate by with any old thing and expect to pass. I had to give one hundred percent in order to receive one hundred percent back. If I wanted a decent grade, for example, I had to study hard and maintain good study habits so I could achieve my goal. Sometimes, it could be a hassle and I may have felt at my lowest, but at Oakwood, we believe that anything is possible if one tries hard enough.

I am glad I came to this special place that God directed me to, for I know it was He that showed me the way to Oakwood. Coming to Oakwood helped me realize that I can make it in any area of study that I choose. God has opened many doors for me and for my friends that attend school here. Upon graduation I shall look back and see what an impact this school has left on me. Thank God for Oakwood!

Brian Ashe

The I-20 Test

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4 (NIV)

Like many other Oakwood students, my most outstanding Oakwood experience was getting clearance for classes. Finance was not my problem; rather I entered the country without having my I-20. When my advisor got my classes in the computer, she sent me to the admissions office. That office told me there was no way I could start school without my I-20 form, so I would have to return to Canada and have the Canadian Embassy sign that form. Until then, I would be in the country illegally and there was nothing they could do until I provided the school with that document.

Right away my faith was placed on trial. I told my sister, who had come to visit for the week that I might as well forget attending school this semester. I figured I would go home, get my I-20 form in order, and try again in September. My sister did not even honor my suggestion with a response. She reminded me that there was no way the Lord would bring me this far to have me turn back.

As soon as we left the admissions office, we went back to the home of my sister's best friend where we were staying until I was cleared for my room. My sister told her friend about the problem, and right away Joan suggested that we pray and leave it in the hands of the Lord. That is exactly what we did. The following morning, my family back home had faxed through all the information needed to complete my I-20 form. There was still the issue of having it signed by the Canadian Embassy. The lady responsible for international students said that she would allow me to continue my financial clearance as long as I signed

a contract saying that she has the right to withdraw me from school if my I-20 form was not signed quickly. Literally, a day or so later, a friend of mine said he was going to Canada for the weekend and wanted to know if I would come to help him drive. I was surprised how the Lord had quickly worked things out for me. I had become discouraged. I wanted to give up and go home, but that was not part of God's plan.

I believe that it is God's intention for me to be at Oakwood College. He, however, allowed me to have that negative experience in order to increase my faith and believe in His promises.

Nadine Tillmuth

I-20 Again

...I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

Psalms 91:15

Oakwood College is a great school with friendly, God-fearing people. The educators teach at an intellectual level. As a foreign student I have spent much of this fall semester in various administrative offices on campus.

Originally from Canada, I am required to have an I-20 form. This form allows me as a foreign student to attend any school and to get my education in the United States of America. Others told me that at Oakwood College, many Canadian students have trouble with their I-20's. Unfortunately, I became part of this dilemma. I should have cleared all dealings with my I-20 in Canada, but since I did not receive my affidavit on time, I could not acquire one. It turned out that from the day I arrived at Oakwood, I was assigned a task to receive an I-20. Day after day, between classes, I visited the different offices dealing with my I-20. It came to a point where the Office of International Affairs and the Admissions Office knew me by sight.

It took a long time for me to receive my I-20, so my first semester at Oakwood was filled with frustration and confusion. Many assignments were not completed to the teachers' satisfaction or to my own, and as a result, my grades dropped tremendously. In the end, my grades were so poor that I ended up failing many of my classes.

While I faced many distractions during my first freshman semester, this problem proved that my I-20 test topped all my other prob-

lems. I was very disturbed about the situation, because coming to Oakwood or any other Seventh-day Adventist institution was not my choice but was my parents' dream from the time I was in my mother's womb.

Unfortunately, the adversary tried to work his way into God's plan, but God won each time. I have learned through this experience that God's plan will come through for each person who commits his life to God.

Francis Marcellin

My "Whatsoever" Experience

And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do... I will do it.

John 14:13, 14

I consider myself totally complete by God's grace and mercy, especially when test and trials of this sinful world stare me in the face. This text is my "torch" for the dark gloomy days that I may have to endure. One may ask the question "Why this text?" Now, my personal interpretation of this text is that, with faith anything is possible. Moreover, I can conquer sin and all in the name of Jesus Christ my Risen Savior. On life's journey, I realize that we may have many trials but God will help us by his power.

I knew that our coming here to Oakwood was the will of my Father but we had to take the leap of faith. I can recall the many struggles and disappointments that confronted me as my husband and I prepared documents, cash and personal items for our journey to Oakwood.

We tested God, and He proved to us that He is the true God. I remembered our trial that took place the day when the bank wanted a certain amount of cash from each of us. We had to send proof to Oakwood College of our financial viability to attend school for the first school year. The good Lord knew that we did not have the needed amount of cash, but my favorite text was put together with my husband's text, John 14:13: "Whatsoever you ask in My name I will do it." This wrapped together nicely with words from our mouths and the meditations of our hearts, and our Savior accepted our plea in His name. I remembered the night before the deadline for the bank, we prayed and

asked the Lord to show us someone in our dream, whom we could ask to assist us in this dilemma. We prayed and then went to bed.

Dear reader, that night the good Lord showed me a gentleman in my dream. He was one of my husband's co-workers and a friend. The next morning I told my husband the dream. He was a bit reluctant to believe, moreover to ask the gentleman for help. I could not ask the gentleman myself because to me, that was not ethical. However, with much hesitation we finally asked him and he sent us more than we expected. My God is real. He came through for us and our faith helped us to claim our "whatsoever". Our faith was the evidence of what we did not see. God filled in blank spaces. We praise Him for His great love and care. He will help you too if you ask Him.

Cathy Wildman

Molding of a Writer's Mind

*...and he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.
Revelation 21:5*

I've always wanted to be a multi-talented individual who can work in any field. I felt it was necessary because I have a love for service, and knowing how to perform multiple tasks makes me more marketable.

Since coming to Oakwood College, I've joined a number of clubs; but none have impacted my life as much as the Literary Guild. In it, I have found an earnest desire to write and tell others about the blessings of God. Sometimes I am even forced to evaluate my writing style and the seriousness of this talent, which is so powerful.

As Parliamentarian/Chaplain for the Guild, I tried my best to encourage others to respect order and to put God first in everything they do. It was a privilege to see persons comforted by the words of others – words which flowed from the Master author straight to humble, human pens and computers. This caused me to treat each Guild workshop as a chance to allow some other person to recognize their talent and/or refine the writing talents of others.

On November 1, 2000, the Guild became a member of American Christian Writers (ACW). It was an awesome experience. Reg Forder, founder and director of ACW came from the headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee to deliver the main address and induct the mem-

bers of the Guild. We would be the first ACW chapter in the state of Alabama and the 27th nationwide.

Here we were, a small club in Huntsville, Alabama, taking the gigantic step of going national. Planning was everything. Invitations had to be sent. Flyers had to be made, and the entire weekend had to be organized down to the last event and detail.

Mr. Forder, in his address, encouraged the Guild to remember the purpose for their writing – the glorification of God. He also gave constructive writing tips and sought to address the many areas on which Christian writers could focus. However, one thing I will always remember is how he made himself available for countless hours to answer questions and showcase various resource materials. We enjoyed sitting and expressing our feelings on writing with him.

The support we received from our sponsors and Dr. Gooding, Chair of the English and Communications department was admirable. Dr. Gooding not only commended us verbally, but made extensive changes to her schedule. This was a reassurance that our writing was important and that we should be proud to stand for God as his penmen and women. We would change lives and mold people, old and young, for Christ through our writing.

This club has shown me that writers are valuable. I have learnt what it means to fight and that with God all things are possible. I urge each person with the gift of writing to acknowledge your responsibility and write.

Linda L. Skeete

From Whence Cometh my Help

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121: 1, 2

“You still need to pay the 63 percent for this fall semester, which is \$2,427.03. In total, \$8,867.73 needs to be paid in order for you to be cleared.” Hot tears began to gather in my eyes. Where can I get that kind of money? I came to Oakwood College because I had great assurance that the Lord was going to bless the courage in my heart.

My mother did not have a penny in her bank account to put towards my school fees, but she later found a resource, her pension

money. Still that would not have been enough; she had to pay off the balance I owed. I felt like I was flooded with overwhelming problems eighteen-year-old students should not have to handle. All I could do was get on my knees and pray hard without failing. My mother prayed too, day and night, and I realized that when she prayed, extraordinary things started to happen.

I had come to the deadline date for financial clearance. That day was every un-cleared student's nightmare, when you had to sit in the financial officer's office and await the verdict. This was it, the decision that would say whether I would receive the stamp of approval, the clearance stamp that would state that I was financially cleared. I know the Lord must have moved His hand of mercy over me, for He cleared me with the honesty of my word and with no money to add to my account. He gave me a miracle that day.

Believe it when the Lord says, "I am with you for when you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you...Fear not, for I am with you." Isaiah 43:2-5.

Alannah Bartholmew

Higher Order Registration

And thine ears shall hear... "This is the way, walk in it..."

Isaiah 30:21

This was the day before the end of registration for my last spring semester at Oakwood College. This semester I was alone when it came time to register. So there I was in the office with my advisor. When we had finished choosing my classes, I had to go next door to have them entered into the computer. When my classes were being entered, I found that four out of the six classes I had chosen were closed; so I was basically left with only two classes to attend.

The assistant at the computer told me it would be better to go and find each specific teacher and have him or her sign the Add/Drop slip to see if I could still get into the classes. So I headed out that evening in doubt and disbelief that I would ever find the teachers. Soon I began to feel discouraged and had feelings of wanting to return home. Then a quiet voice told me to tell the Lord my situation and right then I began to speak to the Lord and explain the whole dilemma to Him, for

then I knew I needed a Higher Order Registration, one designed by God alone.

It so happened that this specific semester I needed to take either Art or Music Appreciation. I had taken piano lessons for five years when I was younger so I knew a lot about music. However, that did not interest me. I chose the Art Appreciation class because I figured it would not be difficult to talk about painting every class meeting. (An easy "A" I thought). The problem was that the art class was also closed.

So, I started off to look for the teacher of that class when a hymn came to my mind and I began to sing it. Later another hymn came into my mind. During the time I spent searching for the teacher at least five different songs came to my mind and I sang them all. After my "personal song service" the thought came to me that I should take Music Appreciation instead of Art Appreciation because I was filled with music and it was a part of me. I headed off reluctantly to that department and found the teacher who had not been there earlier that day. He signed my Add/Drop slip without a fuss and I was in the class. After that was done I headed back to my department and changed my art class to Music Appreciation with no problem. That evening I received a Higher Order Registration. The Lord arranged every class that I wanted so well that I finished registering with all six of my classes and I was ready to be financially cleared the very next day.

God's presence was with me when I began hearing songs continuously in my mind because I knew He was showing me which class to choose out of the two. After I had been in that class for two months, a number of topics and terms came up that I could quickly recall and identify from my piano lessons years ago. God truly answered my prayer.

Tabitha Lynn Miller

Gift Transition: From Bible to Canvas

*Now there are diversities of gifts but the same spirit ...
Are all apostles? Are all prophets?... But covet earnestly
the best gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:4, 29-31*

Enthusiastic for the new experience that I would encounter, I

came to Oakwood College expecting a deeper and closer walk with God but not in the way that it turned out three years later. My plans for pursuing a career as a preacher stimulated me to select Theology as my major, because my mind was set on a bright future of evangelism as a pastor. As the semester rolled along I discovered that even though I was happy with the theology classes, something was missing. I was not totally fulfilled. There was a void within. God gave me a talent to draw and soon made me realize that I was dishonoring Him by not using this talent to the best of my ability. To this I gave careful thought for some time.

Finally, my cousin Eishah with God 's help made me understand the value of my artistic gift and encouraged me to change majors from Theology to Art. My spiritual gift transition led me from Bible to canvas. The peace that I experienced after this career shift was indescribable. I knew that God was with me and that He was going to guide me through my transition. To this very day I have had no any regrets for the decision I made.

I signed up for my first art class and from the first day my creative juices began to flow. The art teacher, noticed my ability and shared with me invaluable pointers; however, I was still geared to theology. I failed to see the use of Art as an effective tool for ministry, and I did not think that it was a mainstream career. One day however, a friend of mine who had received an illustration that I painted asked me why I was studying theology. This question made me think and soon I began to wrestle with myself again about the reason I had chosen to study theology over art. Then I realized that I was bottling up a precious gift that God had given to me to be used for His service. The thought of keeping my talent from being sharpened and developed stunned me. My friend's influence made me realize where I needed to place my focus, and for that I'm indebted to him. My painting class professor also helped me to appreciate my personal style of expression. He nurtured my talent, and showed me how to cultivate my individual style, instead of trying to change it.

The contributions of these influential people have given me my special kind of Oakwood experience, one that I will always treasure. The love of my fellow students and the caring concern of resident assistants, deans, teachers, and staff members at Oakwood have all combined to create for me a special art experience, a Christ-centered one never to be forgotten. Long live Oakwood College!

Edison Liburd

Just Around the Corner From Heaven

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. Isaiah 54:13

"Oakwood is just around the corner from Heaven!" my new acquaintance boasted. I believed every word she said, until...a few days later, our friend's mother took my sister and me aside.

"I overheard what my daughter told you girls, and I want you to know she was not telling the truth. Oakwood is a Christian school, but not everyone who goes there is a Christian. You will find good and bad there, so choose your friends wisely."

To this day, I am glad for the counsel our pastor's wife gave us.

During my father's lifetime, although he had never been there, he believed in Oakwood Junior College. His final word to my sister and me was for us to "stay in the church." For that reason, the description my new friend gave me of Oakwood made it sound like an ideal place to prepare for heaven.

I graduated from high school with scholarships to Hampton Institute and Talladega College. Oakwood College was being considered, but my widowed mother did not have the necessary funds. I was tempted to use one of the scholarships, but Momma was unyielding in her determination that my sister and I should attend Oakwood Junior College.

A conversation with my civics teacher added to my dilemma, "Which one of the colleges have you chosen, Rollins?" Mr. Blake asked.

"Neither one." I responded.

"Rollins," he scolded, "You are too talented a young lady to waste your time in a small, insignificant church college. I'm a Baptist; and I did not attend my church college. I went to West Virginia State where I could get a better education and my money's worth. I hope you will change your mind."

I chose Oakwood Junior College. It was a very special place. The morning and evening worship and Friday evening vespers helped mold my spirituality. We were better off in the atmosphere as it existed in that area. People were less affluent and there were far fewer distractions. The work ethic was strongly followed, which helped form character, and the students had better grades. There is much to be said favoring physical labor rather than round after round of ball games and other play.

I regret I did not have the opportunity of attending church school

beyond third grades, but that is another story. Although I graduated from high school with honors, I did not know my Bible. I was literally "shaken from my foundation." I could not compete in Bible classes with the students who had a church school background. Denominational history was foreign to me.

From the first time I walked on Oakwood campus, the grounds became sacred. I hold a deep reverence for those grounds. God ordained the school and its locale, and I am sure He wants it to be completely representative of Him - a place that should be as close to heaven as we can get on this earth. - "Just around the corner from heaven" as it were. By God's grace, we can make it that.

Mabel Rollins-Norman

Reflections on the LEAP Program

...with God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26

My children will be overjoyed when I stop saying, "Sorry, I can't read to you right now. I have to study" or "I can only play for five minutes, then I have to finish my paper." They are literally counting down the days until I will be finished with the LEAP program; I am too. Actually, I am finished with all of the LEAP modules and am currently taking my last SWING class. It took me a long time to decide that I would complete my degree through the LEAP degree completion program. It actually took me longer to decide than to finish. I had many questions (questions of time, money, ability); but I finally realized that all my questions were really excuses, and I took a leap of faith and registered.

One night a week for four hours is really an excellent situation for a working mother of two, but the difficulty came in trying to make time during the days of the week to write papers, summarize chapters, and complete back to back projects. During my time in the LEAP program I rediscovered the fact that "I can do all things through Christ..." It was truly difficult trying to grasp the concepts of managerial economics with my five-year old taking up residence on my lap, pleading that I read to her. My peers understood this problem because most of the students in my group (Gamma IV) were working parents, returning to school after a long absence, holding down full-time jobs and trying to run a household. We were able to encourage, support and learn from each other.

There was a time during the winter months that I seriously contemplated quitting. Up until very recently we were a one car family and every Thursday night my husband would have to bundle the kids up and leave the warm house to come pick me up. I felt terrible I was depriving my family of proper sleep and relaxation. I wanted to throw up my hands and say forget it! This experience allowed me to rediscover that I have the world's most supportive and encouraging husband. The laundry, the cooking, the cleaning, the kids, and the "You can do it." He gave generously, and that made all the difference. Soon my children actually treated the weekly Thursday night to Knight Hall as an adventure and looked forward to it.

My reflections on the LEAP program would not be complete if I did not give praise to God. He held my hand throughout the whole process and opened financial doors for me. When I felt that there was no way that I could understand certain concepts, He opened the academic doors and gave me understanding during those very early (3:00 a.m.) hours of the morning. God's study sessions gave me success. I have learned a lot about myself while in the LEAP program. I have become more confident of my God-given abilities and I have discovered that I want to continue and do more. More than anything I am happy that I took the opportunity to demonstrate to my children that, with God, they can do anything that they set their minds to do, for "with God all things are possible."

Marcia Getfield


God's Degree

I will answer them before they even call to me. While you are still talking to me about their needs I will go ahead and answer their prayers.

Isaiah 65:24 (The Living Bible)

Milton, my husband of seven and one-half years, passed away suddenly of an aneurysm, leaving me with two small girls, (one and one-half and three and one-half years old) and a million "What shall I do next?" questions.

I was in the middle of working on an associate degree in accounting at a local technical college when the first "what's next" ques-

JoyNotes! 

tion arrived. Should I finish my degree or drop out, get a job and make the best out of a bad situation. I prayed like the disciples. God said, "Follow Me." I did and finished the program with honors. But the "What's next?" questions showed up again. My entire life's dreams, expectations, goals, and future were intertwined with a person who had passed away eight months earlier. So, I went back to God and again asked, "What's next, Lord?" The dilemma: more education? If so, where? I needed to work for my older daughter would be entering kindergarten and the younger one needed full-time childcare. All this sounded like money, stress, working and a lot of late nights studying. But Isaiah 65:23 says "Before they call I will answer and while they are yet speaking I hear." I decided to take God at His word- I CALLED.

Taking the suggestion of a friend, I changed my major to communications with an emphasis in broadcasting and public relations and entered Oakwood College that fall. Before taking the first class I decided God and I needed to have a little talk. I shared with God my plans that I would (1) put Him first, (2) continue to call on Him for direction, (3) claim the promises, and (4) do my part in the plan of salvation. In return, I asked God to help me obtain my degree by allowing me to ride on the wings of His dove. The next three years seemed hard. I was a student during the day and turned into an instant "mommy" at the end of the day. But the Lord was true to His part of the bargain. Many times I had to remember to "call," but He was always faithful to answer. Soon I graduated with a B.A. degree in communications and a 3.34 GPA (I had asked for only a 3.00). He freely gave me additional blessings and made me a host of two radio programs on the college's radio station, placing both children in church school, and helping me to continue my education.

God says, "Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be opened." I followed the instruction. I asked. He gave wisdom when I could not understand the material being taught; He opened doors of opportunity when I needed that the most, and gave solutions when I was looking for answers to my numerous questions.

You see, I called and He was there passing out a degree with my name on it while I was yet speaking. He can do the same for each of us if we only ask, believe, and claim, His promises. He has many blessings with your name on them! Claim them.

Ivy J. Starks

Study to Show Thyself...

What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Matthew 16:26 (NIV)

You have probably read or heard of *Dr. Faustus*, a play by Christopher Marlowe. In case you have not, here is a synopsis of it.

Dr. Faustus, the main character, is a very learned and intelligent person – the quintessential intellectual. Despite his vast knowledge, however, he is not content: he wants to know more – more than can be accessible to humans. To attain his goal, he makes a deal with Mephistopheles, the devil. For 24 years, Mephistopheles would be Dr. Faustus' servant, doing all his bidding. After the period, however, Dr. Faustus would surrender his soul to Mephistopheles. For some years, Mephistopheles revels in his magical powers; he has become a god of sorts, but a god that will soon be damned. For each second that ticks, damnation draws nearer. With knowledge, Dr. Faustus becomes a miserable man – nay, a wretched man.

Then, there is the parable of talents in the Bible that you all know. One of the recipients of the talents does nothing with his only talent, and because of his indolence he is thrown “outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:30). Like Dr. Faustus, he too is damned.

Need I comment on the relevance of these parables to our academic experience at Oakwood College? It is obvious: they speak eloquently to the question of our intellect and our identity. We are all here to discover, actualize, and put to good use the talents that our Maker has given us. Indeed the question of our identity is paramount. We are not masters of our talents; we are stewards, who are accountable. All that the Master asks of us is to do our best to cultivate and make good use of them.

John Milton said it very well, “God doth not need\Either man's work or His own gifts. Who best\Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him Best.”

Gatsinzi Basaninyenzi

500 Words or Less: Miscellaneous Thoughts

*Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom
Thou hast given Me. John 17:11*

Today they came, those essays, all autobiographical, all unique patches of the lives of the 78 students in my Freshman Composition classes. After completing the papers, I sat in my office exhausted. I thought, well, about many things. I thought about my student who had recently received a call to the ministry. I thought about the student who after several years of promiscuous behavior had finally accepted Jesus as her personal Savior. I even pondered my own experience with racism as I rehearsed the frustration of the student who experienced racism, at an early age while attending a Seventh-day Adventist Christian academy. And yeah, I chuckled about the student who enjoyed her first kiss.

But...but the thought that left a lethal vapor in my mind, the one that caused me to take a long breath, get up from my desk, and stare out of the window, was a line from an essay of a student you know is gifted, the kind you spend the semester saying, "Lord, speak to him. I know You are calling out his name. Let him hear You calling his name."

In the opening line of an essay in which he relates the story about a time in his life when he followed some girls to a nightclub, he says, "I seen a man shot dead today."

"I seen a man shot dead"...too. (The vulgarity of homicide is, I suppose, understood by the use of Ebonics.) He was my best friend. His name was Ricky. I think of him often. Sometimes, I even cry; I miss him."

The missing...of a friend is, yeah, gnawing, unforgiving. That is the emptiness that stirs me to pray for my students...for young people everywhere.

Ramona Hyman

Computer Promise

If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. Matthew 18:19

Our freelance writing assignment was heavy, but none of us owned a computer. The regular routine was to find an available computer that was connected to a working printer in the reading or writing lab. Sometimes when we were not able to complete an assignment during the day, the only thing we could do was to work during the late hours of the evening. In spite of our love for writing, this hassle created "burnout." Undoubtedly, my friend and I each needed to own a computer.

We agreed on that point. How could one single woman and a single parent with limited funds amass sufficient cash for each to purchase a computer? That was a puzzle to be solved not by us but by The One with whom "nothing is impossible." Each time we had a writing assignment, and especially when our old workhorses refused to function well, we would sing the same song,

"We definitely need a computer and we will pray for one. God knows how to work this out, in His own time, in His own way."

"Let's claim a promise for our computers." Matthew 18:19 came into mind: "If two of you shall agree as touching anything...it shall be done of My Father." Latifa and I stood in agreement in my living room. We claimed the promise and reminded our Father that we would dedicate our computers to Him to do His work. If He would only give us a computer each, we could realize our ministry. We thanked Him for answering and released the problem to watch a miracle take place. Strangely enough, in less than two weeks my friend, Latifa called to say that something special had happened in her life, and she wanted me to know. "God, in an outstanding way, had provided her a computer, and she was coming over for us to thank Him together." We prayed a prayer of thanksgiving on the same spot where we made our prayer request; but now my prayer was strange.

"Father, I thank You for Latifa's computer, but where is mine? Please send mine quickly. Thank You for hearing and answering our prayers. Amen."

A short while after, just as the summer holiday approached, a student asked me to keep his computer and printer and use it whenever I needed to. He explained that he was going home to New York and did not want to take his computer with him. So into my house

came a blessing. It was a computer that I was accustomed to using. After the summer vacation, upon the student's return to school, he was not interested in that computer anymore. The reason, he was a computer major and needed the newest model.

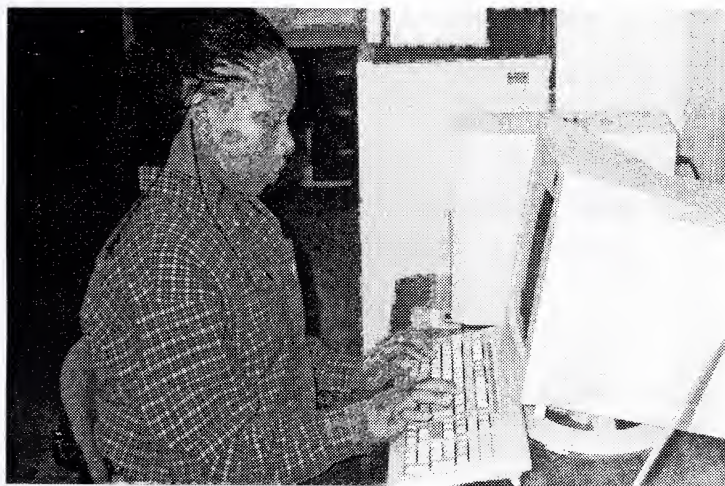
I was getting ready to go on study leave and the student offered to give me a special price on both the computer and printer, since I was kind to him during the time he was in school. We worked out the financial arrangements and this time I called Latifa so we could thank God together for having answered my prayers in a special way. Since then, four other persons have tried that prayer of unity request for computers and they, too, now own computers. Our computer input was obedience to God's directions (If two of you shall agree...), and faith in His promise (...it shall be done). The computer output was blessings in the form of two and more computers.

In the problems of life, remember that our God keeps every promise He has made because He wants His children to be happy. God hears every prayer and answers them in His time.

Cecily Daly

Tassel Threads

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Academic Support Experience

Academic support offered at the reading, writing, and math labs of the Center for Academic Advancement (CAA) collaborates with all the academic departments and gives students an opportunity to develop at their own rate and gain college-level competencies.

“And Aaron and Hur stayed up his [Moses’] hands, the one on the one side and the other on the other side; and his (Moses’) hands were steady until the going down of the sun.”

Exodus 17:12

The Creed

What makes a great teacher?

Being able to use your voice to soothe and comfort;
knowing when to be stern and stand your ground;
being able to compliment and encourage someone;
being able to cope when time gets rough;
being proud of what you are doing;
and at the end of a busy day being able to sigh and say,
"Well done..."

Most of all, it is being able to look forward to the
challenges that you will face tomorrow.

This is my creed and it should be yours.

Being an education major,
this is a creed that I shall follow.

I can remember my favorite teacher of grade 8,
Mrs. Goeden, who reflected elements of this creed.

If we had more teachers like her,
our kids would be very successful in life.

Olawunmi Sobomehin

*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament
and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever
and ever. Daniel 12:3*

Reflections From the Writing Lab

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:30, 31

As a writing specialist at the end of the millennium, I realize that I am an heir to a complex history and a steward of a challenging future. At the writing lab in the Center for Academic Advancement (CAA) we are faced with the products of the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's, which were decades of unrest and experimentation.

Part of the impulse behind my dedication has been the discovery that inexperienced writers are capable of dedication to their crafts. I have discovered that students can move from the inherently rewarding pleasures of personal writing and autobiographical narratives to the more demanding work of other kinds of writing.

The key to our success at the Writing Lab is stressing the importance of motivation. Without motivation, all the writing courses and formulas in the world will avail little. Motivation was special for a certain young man that I tutored because his goal was special. The English Proficiency Exam was the only obstacle that stood between him and graduation. He was seeking "liberation" from a narrow, confining past and a difficult present. At the Writing Lab he discovered concepts that intrigued, confused, angered, and challenged him. He was given opportunities to explore new frontiers, a chance to overcome past mistakes and a route to intellectual and social achievements.

Writing can transform lives. Without an education and the continuing development of writing skills, many individuals wind up leading dead-end, unfulfilled lives. Duane Thomas is a testament to hard work. His newly acquired love for writing catapulted him from a \$4.50 per hour job at a Bar-B-Q fast food restaurant to the enviable position of a full time coach in a public school and a part-time activities coordinator at the Boys and Girls Club.

We at the Writing Lab in the Center for Academic Advancement understand the complex world in which we live. To acquire sufficient understanding and capability requires a rigorous education; the lack of which contributes to the decay of our democracy.

Elizabeth Wright

The Reading Lab, My Oakwood Refuge

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:14

During my stay at Oakwood, my academic experience was very challenging. Each subject made me feel as though I had never been to school even one day in my life. I had to remind myself that I had been out of high school for fifteen years, so I had to work doubly hard to keep up with the younger students who were just leaving school. Those young students were so far ahead of me that I wanted to give up, but I kept pressing on. As Paul said, "I press toward the mark of the prize..." And this text stuck in my mind from day one until I finished Oakwood College.

I remember sitting with my friend Willie on a bench between Moran Hall and DLRC. We talked about how far behind we were, but we did say we could make it. Just as Moses told the people to go the city of refuge, so the Holy Spirit led me to The Developmental Learning Resource Center DLRC, at Oakwood College, now renamed Center for Academic Advancement (CAA).

I spent a great amount of time in the CAA reading lab. Those hours finally paid off. The help I received from the reading specialist and lab assistants was great. I felt those giving tutorial help sometimes grew weary, but that was in my mind. Some students spent sixteen hours a semester at the lab, but for me I more than doubled the required amount of time. In the end, the extra hours yielded great results. I say to everyone who has a learning problem, "go to Oakwood College for this 'haven, this refuge' will pay off." I believe that CAA is needed at Oakwood because it helps students to learn what they may have missed in the early years of schooling. It also assists them to understand reading and writing skills and helps to develop good studying habits.

At CAA, all students are able to gain more knowledge and develop self-esteem. Without this learning center, many students would be lacking in those areas. For the future, I believe that there should be state funding to create more labs of this kind, which can help an unlimited number of students achieve academically.

To older students who may be discouraged at times I give this message: keep pressing on towards your goals even though at times you may feel like stopping. Work hard and God, our Father, will bless you with good rewards in the end.

Joseph Privette

Educational Journey of an LD Student

*I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13*

Many of us that suffer with learning disabilities are known as L.D students and face many difficulties as we pursue our educational goal. In order for us to survive and function successfully in this fast-paced world, we have to work doubly hard. According to the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), Learning disability is "a disorder that affects the manner in which individuals with normal or above average intelligence take in, retain and express information. This problem may be evident in "one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or problem solving." Individuals with learning disabilities may also have difficulty with sustained attention, time management, or social skills."

A learning disability is not unique to any one race or class, but it is frustrating and challenging. It is not always evident to teachers, parents and peers and can often be misunderstood. According to AHEAD, "many adults with learning disabilities often have to "prove" to others that their invisible disabilities are a handicap."

In a world where "education for all" is very important, learning, for a LD student may be like a jackhammer boring its way through a thick layer of concrete. Even though the concrete is hard, the jackhammer will find its way through as it chips away little by little, until it reaches the soft, tender earth. This is the picture of my own unique Oakwood Experience.

Learning to me is just like boring through that thick layer of concrete. However, the teachers and tutors here at Oakwood are just like the jackhammer patiently working with us. They exercise their God-given talents to help me, and others like me, to reach our educational goal and highest potential in life.

I have before encountered those who were critical. Once a teacher told me that I would not be able to write a book, or for that matter, any meaningful piece of literature. To me, this was like saying, "You will never amount to anything." Nevertheless, I pledged to myself that one day I would prove to that teacher just how wrong he was. In the meantime, my grades were dropping and I thought it was all because I was self-conscious of what was said to me. That year, I did not do as well as I had anticipated and my grades dropped tremendously.

However, the following year I came back with renewed vigor.

I went to the Center for Academic Advancement so that those who were well-equipped could help me. By the grace of God, my G.P.A. exceeded 2.0. This made me very happy and reminded me that with hard work LD students too can achieve their educational goals, for with God "all things are possible."

Rey Ceasar

Try, Try, Try Again

The Lord is my Rock...my strength, in whom I will trust...

Psalm 18:2

My most outstanding Oakwood experience took place when I received my report for last semester. Even though I had struggled in some of my classes, I had managed to keep my scores high. When the final exams were starting, I became sick and was unable to write my exams. I missed three exams and I know that is why my grade in those subjects was low. I got three A's, two C+'s and one C. I was not upset because I knew that I could have done better had I not been ill. This semester I am putting my all into everything I do to pull my GPA up. My parents always told me, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again."

During this time of stress, Psalm 18:2 gave me much comfort. This text means a lot to me because it strengthens me. I repeat it so often. "The Lord is my Rock...my Strength in whom I will trust." I know that God will deliver me from all my pain, anger, and problems and in the end I shall be victorious. So, I am never too tired to try, try, and try again. Take my advice and try for yourself.

Sophya Cyrus

Possibilities, Not Scraps

But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand. Isaiah 64:8

"I use all the scraps," she calmly explained with a satisfied, fulfilled gleam in her eyes that convinced me as she leaned against the column at the Festival of Flowers Trade Fair. She continued enthusiastically discussing the pottery she was making.

"I rewedged them and throw them back. I do not waste anything - not even water." She smiled and looked at me as she emphasized slowly, "I - use - e - very - thing."

I thought to myself, "Oh how beautiful!" Even though at times I may feel like "scrap", my Father, the Potter, says it in the exact words as my potter friend. These words re-echoed in my ear, but from a different direction. I heard them clearly.

"I use all the scraps. I rewedge them..."

The voice continued. "When the clay is not pliable enough and my vessels do not turn out right, I throw them back and rewedge them. Only then am I able to bring forth vessels beautiful and usable - a part of My Eternal Plan."

Although I was on vacation and miles away from home at a flower festival, my thoughts turned to our "at-risk" students, those whose academic records label them as potential dropouts and whose self-esteem fits them into what some people may classify as "scraps." I made a silent pledge - I will use all the "scraps" and help them to achieve their potential.

Thoughtfully, I turned to the potter and asked her, "Do you really use all the scraps?"

"Oh yes, I do!" she answered reassuringly. My next question followed quickly, "What is your next step?" Patiently she explained.

"Everything has to be trimmed including the bottom of the vessel. From the time I hold the moist clay in my hands to the completion of the vessel, the process is long and tedious. I have to wedge it to take the air out. Next, I place it on the potter's wheel.

My next move is to cut the clay and weigh the portions. Then I must center it, squeeze it, flatten it down, make an opening, pull the walls up, dry it, trim it, fire it, bisque it, dip and glaze it, and wipe it off clean. Yes, I work the clay, and I use all the scraps."

The lesson I learned from the potter that day, I share with you today. If you at any time work with young people who seem hopeless,

do not commit the great sin of giving up on them. Like the potter, rewedged them and throw them back until eventually from the seeming impossibilities they emerge full-fledge achievers to go forth and bless the world. Remember that they are all possibilities—not scraps.

Cecily Daly

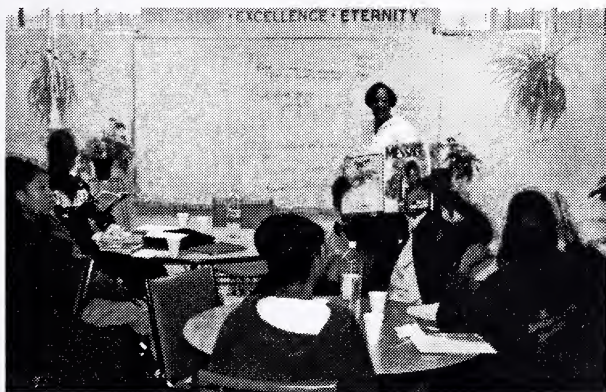
3 *The Keyboard*



The Musical Experience

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*Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song...
Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the children of
Zion be joyful in their King... let them sing praises unto
Him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord taketh pleasure
in His people. He will beautify the meek with salvation.*

Psalm 149: 1-4

He Gave Me His All

You carried the cross
For my transgressions,
To be like You is my impression.
You gave me life
So I can live for you.
You gave me the Bible
That tells me what to do.
You placed a song in my heart
And you made the promise
To come back one day,
And take me to Heaven
Where with you I'll spend each day.

Rose Laure Heriveaux

*...write ye this song . . . put it in their mouths, that this song may be
a witness for me against the children of Israel.*

Deuteronomy 31:19

Elijah Rock and the Gospel Train

...be ye glad and rejoice forever... Isaiah 65:18

God has used many musical experiences to bring resolve and deliverance to me. But one event that really stands out in my mind was Youth Day at Oakwood College Church on this past Sabbath. The Oakwood Academy choir sang my favorite song "Elijah Rock". Whenever I hear that song I cannot contain myself. I start to sway from side to side in my seat and I can't help but sing along. It moves me in ways that no other song can. I get a really good feeling as it emphasizes the power that God has. The young people sang this song so beautifully. God used them to do a really powerful ministry through music. Just glancing around anyone could tell that the congregation was touched by the music.

The second song was uplifting, even though I do not recall the name. A male and a female soloist sang their parts and they did an excellent job! The words of the song were powerful. Could anyone sit through a service like this, and not get a blessing? But the most enjoyable experience during the whole service, including the sermon, was the children's story. For the first time, I heard the gospel taught to little children. Usually, the children's story is something like, "If you lose you quarter, pray and God will help you find it." This is good in itself, for we're living in the last days and children need to know this, too. But the thing that got me most was the way the lesson was taught to the children.

This was the most original children's story that I had ever heard. The gospel was presented as a gospel train. There were three cars, love, grace, and truth. Each car had a different sound (which was represented by someone singing an alto, tenor, and bass line that sounded something like, do-do, do-doop, doop-do-do-do-doop) and when each car was put together, all the sounds combined to make a song. It was so good. Then the storyteller told the children to listen for the train whistle, so that they would know that the gospel train was coming. I heard "All aboard! Get on the gospel train; the train is coming;" but the whistle was my favorite part. Instead of the toot-toot that I expected, he said "Loud Cry" for the whistle (the warning that the gospel train was coming). It was the first time that I had ever heard children learn the gospel in such a creative way in church, and it was so simple that even a child could understand it.

That's how God moved me through music at Oakwood Col-

lege. He comes to us in so many different ways we need only to listen for Him and make Him our friend.

Talitha Wesson

A Prodigal Son and the Prodigal Song

And he arose and came to his father... Luke 15:20

The phone rang about three o'clock in the morning. Feeling in the darkness for the telephone, everything but patient thoughts flooded my mind. Those thoughts fled the moment I heard the voice, thick and full of emotion, on the other end of the line the voice of my baby brother, David. It seemed that David had been struggling ever since he came into this world. Born almost two months early, he fought for life from the beginning. Now, 18 years old, 6'6", 250lbs., his shoe size matched his age, but he was still searching for peace. Larger than most men, this little boy just could not find rest. My heart ached for him as he sobbed almost uncontrollably. Not being able to hug him, I listened to all he said. Immediately, I was reminded of the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15: 11-20, NIV). And that, it seemed, was just the reason for this call.

Only two days earlier, I gave him the Fred Hammond and Radical for Christ, "In the Spirit of David" CD for his eighteenth birthday. The evening before, my brother had fallen asleep listening to that recording. He was somehow awakened and heard the song "Prodigal Son". Among many things in this song, Mr. Hammond talks about how God's house is empty if one of His children is not there. My brother, tired of living "worse than pigs," finally wanted to come home.

Fred Hammond's song had done in about five minutes what unending ages of my preaching and nagging had not been able to accomplish. I was overjoyed as I knelt in the dark and prayed for him and with him that morning. My heart felt only a fraction of the joy that is in the heart of the Father and all the rest of heavenly beings as the Prodigal Son came down that hard, lonely road back home. I assured my brother that God did not simply wait but ran to meet him with open arms. I encouraged him to read the parable after which his now favorite song was named, and the stories of the man after whom he was named, King David. We whispered to each other I love you and good-bye and disconnected temporarily, for he called many times that day.

I smile when I remember shopping for the CD. I was so frustrated, tired from a long week, and rushing, for I had less than half an hour until sunset that memorable Friday evening. About to give up, I had dashed into Musicland, the only store I hadn't been in. Fred Hammond & RFC practically screamed at me for purchase. I bought the CD reluctantly. I did not think David would want anything else "religious" from me. Now it seemed that this CD, "The Spirit of David" including the inspirational song, "The Prodigal Son," was penned just for him. I recall that the biblical David, a musician himself, had to find his way back to God on more than one occasion. Yet, God called him a man after His own heart.

When will I learn that God knows just what He is doing? Clearly, he showed me what he is doing with a prodigal son and the prodigal song.

KhyMBERLI CAISE

Forgiven and Accepted

...thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:19

The music experience at Oakwood College was a blessing to me. The four years at Oakwood were the most exciting time of my life. I had always heard that students at Oakwood made the most beautiful music of any students anywhere. I had never heard such a variety of great and inspiring music until I came here to this campus. I came from a small church of approximately 200 members, if that many. Before Oakwood, I was only familiar with church hymns and hymnals. We did not have a church choir back home and our Sabbath music usually came from a soloist if we were fortunate to have music on Sabbath. I was absolutely overwhelmed by the music that I heard weekly at Oakwood.

One of the things that I liked about Oakwood was that one could choose the type of music one preferred to sing or listen to because of the diverse number of choirs on campus. For instance, if one preferred gospel music, one had the option of joining either Dynamic Praise or Voices of Triumph. If the preference was the spirituals or anthems, one might choose the Aeolians.

My personal music experience where God played a tremendous role in my life occurred on a Friday night at A.Y.S. on our campus

at Oakwood. "Willing, Succeeding and Black" performed a play about the controversy between God and Satan. A young lad, Troy, was trying his best to live a life that God wanted him to live. He started going to church, reading his Bible, and praying often. Basically, he was trying to do the things that God intended him to do, but Troy had a couple of so-called friends who would always try to get him to do worldly things. Troy's friends would go over to his house during the times that he would be trying to study God's word and pray. Their aim was to get him to go with them and do things that he knew he was not supposed to do.

One night his friends showed up at his house and talked him into going with them to rob a convenience store. Troy finally gave in and went with them. They ended up getting caught and being placed in jail. In jail Troy realized what he had done and asked God to forgive him. Every night before he went to sleep, Troy would pray and ask God to forgive him for what he had done. Satan appeared in Troy's dream one night and told him that he needed to stop praying to some god who was not obviously listening to him. God then appeared to Troy and told him not to listen to what Satan had to say because, as a forgiving Father, He had already forgiven Troy for what he had done since the first prayer. God then stretched out his arms while Troy ran into them and was embraced by God.

The performers then played the song written by Daryl Coley "TO LIVE IS CHRIST". I remember it as though it took place yesterday. Tears ran down my eyes because for the first time I actually knew what the words of the song meant.

No matter what we may be going through and what sins we commit in our everyday lives, God is still there to forgive us no matter how bad it may seem. That night I turned over a new leaf and I was forgiven; I accepted Christ as my personal Savior. Have you asked God's forgiveness and accepted Him into your life? The choice is yours today.

Devonda Gordon

A Turn-a-Round

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new, right spirit within me.
Psalm 51:10 (The Clear Word)*

As a freshman at Oakwood College, I had numerous experiences in which the Lord worked directly in my life giving me the message that I needed to serve Him. There were many instances when I felt the hand of God on me, showing me things that I should be doing. However, there was one particular experience during my tenure there which brought about the greatest resolve and change in my life through my own use of music.

On a recent choir tour during my freshman year at Oakwood College, the Oakwood College Aeolians traveled to California to fill engagements in the area of southern California. As traveling members of the choir, each of us knew that we or she had to make a sacrifice in order to go because our bodies were already tired from doing school-work and we were going to be missing two additional days of classes. However, we decided to do the Lord's work and trust that He would take care of us.

From the moment that our plane landed in California, all of the choir members felt very fatigued. Yet even though we were tired, we always received an extra supply of energy that recharged our tired bodies and put us on fire for the Lord. Our entire persona changed from a tired and worn out state to a feeling of oneness with God. I can't explain the joy that we felt every time we performed on that tour. But one thing I know is that God truly worked on not only the hearts of those to whom we ministered, but He also impressed His love on our hearts as well.

We began to be on fire for Him and people sensed an urgency and sincerity about what we were doing. We were not just performers anymore. We were ministers of the gospel. We prayed consistently for strength and for God to sustain our tired voices, and He answered our prayers. He never left our choir in a state of fatigue and, not only did He bless us in accomplishing our original goal to California, but He also blessed us in turning around our relationships with Him. Personally, I was never quite the same after Jesus turned around my life while He used me as a minister with the Oakwood College Aeolians in California.

Joel Boyce

Connect Five

*Sing a new song to the Lord because He has done wonderful things.
Psalm 98:1 (The Clear Word)*

I remember it as if it were yesterday. An event took place in my hometown that touched my life as well as the lives of many others around me, and a great blessing it was, too. What is a blessing? A blessing is something the Lord gives to the heart ushering in His presence or joy. I was blessed by a group of young men whom I will never forget, Connect 5.

I was going to this concert to hear a very well rounded group of singers perform, and to sing with my choir at this function. Little did I know that the Lord had different plans for me. He had a blessing in store, just waiting for me to receive it. I have listened to great musicians, but none of them quite blessed me as Connect 5 did. I was not the only one blessed by this group. A few of my friends were also blessed and gave their lives to Christ. How thankful I was that I listened to Connect 5 and allowed them to minister to me.

When their final song for the evening came, a group member, Robert, began to share some words of testimony with the audience. He gave an encouraging thought that we should stand, and become soldiers for Christ. That is when they began to sing the song "Stand." The words, the music, and the harmony all touched my heart deeply. While the group was singing, I reflected on my life and realized that I should be a soldier for God. As the tears streamed down my cheeks, I felt at that very moment the presence of my Savior caressing my back saying, "It will be all right; just cry on."

That day I decided to become a soldier for Christ, to follow His will, and to chop the devil at every opportunity. The message I heard in that song was "Be strong and stand."

If more people take the time to listen to the words of various songs, many lives will be changed. My prayer is that with the help of Christ, the music ministry of Connect 5 will continue to grow strong in spiritual power. Since I listened to that group in my hometown, one of the members has been laid to rest. P.J. Bodie is awaiting the call of the Life giver. Rest in peace, P.J., until we meet again on that Great Day when we all will connect forever.

Craig Mejias

God Took My Pain Away

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me...and you will find rest for your souls.

Matt 11:28-30 (NIV)

It seemed a long week, and this was only Wednesday. The tests, the quizzes, the reports seemed to be piling up by the seconds. My professor in the Biology Department had planned a mandatory lecture the night of the Miss Oakwood College Pageant, another wrench in my personal plans. This night I was more depressed than ever before. Family life was shaky. Grandma was sick, my brother's escapade landed him in a mental hospital, and my parents were distraught about other events that had taken place during the summer. The only thing left to do this night, other than the massive load of homework, was to go to prayer meeting at the Oakwood College Church.

This night was different because, for the first time, I went to the Youth Prayer Meeting in the Moseley Complex. If there were anyone who could relate to my delicate situation, surely a college student would be found in church on this dreary night. I went to church. I saw the speaker...but did not get the rich encouragement I expected. Just as I was about to leave, the Oakwood College Youth Choir stood up to sing. Watching the directress arrange and rearrange the students, I decided to stay.

The choir began to sing and I was moved to tears. The words, the melody, the song, everything seemed designed just for me. "He'll take the pain away, I know, I know, He'll take the pain." The choir members allowed God to use them as instruments to give me a ray of hope in my time of hopelessness. They continued to sing, "You have been searching for such a long time, searching for strength and some peace of mind, but there is a friend who will step in on time, He'll take the pain away." Right then I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit, as I prayed to Him to just take away, the anxiety, the pain, the pressure, the headache. I cried, "Take it away, Lord." Immediately, I felt peace. As I sat there, my cheeks reddened from salty tears, I was impressed to open my Bible and read the promise, a promise that for sometime had seemed distant and unobtainable was now within reach.

Matthew 11:28-30 reads: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto

you souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Yes I can truly say, that night “He took my pain away.” Why not go to Him and let Him take your pain away?

Kendra Jones

A Special Family Bond

*How wonderful it is, how pleasant, when brothers live
in harmony! . . . Harmony is as refreshing as the
dew. . . Psalm 133:1, 3 (Living Bible)*

Throughout my entire life, music has been an important part of my growing up experience. When I decided to attend Oakwood College in the fall of 1997, I was anxious to become a part of the Aeolians, a musical group I had heard so much about. Because I had sung with the Pine Forge Academy Choir years before, I knew that this musical experience would be one I would never forget even long after I was a student at Oakwood College. Although music is not my major, I totally enjoyed the hours put into practicing and learning the music that we later performed. The songs we sang were not only words but also testimonies of how the Lord helped us through many trials.

The Aeolians is more than a choir. The Aeolians is a family. At the beginning of every practice we had testimonies and prayer. Whoever had burdens on their heart could share it with the choir and ask for special prayer. Or, choir members could share with the choir how the Lord had already answered their prayers. I remember a time when my mother was in fear of being laid off from the job where she had worked for over twenty years. I was very worried and decided to share my burden with the choir and ask them to pray for her.

Ordinarily, I am not one to get up and share my personal business with individuals I do not know very well; but I summoned enough courage that evening to share what was on my heart. When I finished, I felt like a burden had been lifted and I became confident that everything would work out the way God planned.

For several weeks different choir members would approach me to inquire about my mother and her job situation. Although I still did not know the outcome for several weeks, I felt confident to tell them that all was well and I had nothing to worry about. About a month after I had shared this dilemma with the choir, I was able to tell them that my

mother would keep her job. The members of the choir seemed so very happy and we all praised the Lord then and there.

Although I am no longer a part of the Aeolians, I will never forget the special family bond that we shared with each other. The care and concern that members feel for one another reminds me of how heaven will be, a heavenly family with a special family bond.

Crystal Boney

God's Instrument

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

As a freshman, new to the college experience I kept my little voice a secret. I had some experience singing, but it was nothing in comparison with some of the great singers who have passed through these hallowed grounds. If someone were to mention the names of musicians that have come out of my college there are so many places that they could begin. There is Take 6, Chris Willis, Brian McKnight, Virtue, and the list just goes on and on. I could only hope to sing with a group one-day and get a little solo part so that I could show everybody that I could sing. So I just sat on my talent while I observed others using theirs.

One evening at one of the bowling alleys in Huntsville, Alabama I was minding my own business just singing away to the music that the bowling alley had playing for us. All of the sudden without warning the current AYS director came up to me and said, "Would you sing for the freshman AYS next week?"

I remained silent for a couple of seconds, thinking of a way that I could get out of it. "Ah well, I...you see...I...well I guess so," I replied, not even sure of my own response. Nevertheless, I had committed to something and I had to do it. As the week progressed I began to develop this attitude of humility. Scared yet confident I began to search for a song that would make me "sound good." Then the Lord revealed to me it is not how one sounds; it is the act of reaching someone that is important, which makes the difference. I realized that saving a soul by being a vessel for God is the task of an instrument so to speak. "But God, don't I still have to sound good even if it is for you?"

The Lord replied to me, "In heaven I have beautiful angels that can sing extravagant polyphony all by themselves. Remember that person that you were laughing at in church who you thought could not sing. How can you say that you are any better in My sight? It is not the song but it is the sincerity of the heart. When one hears a saxophonist play a beautiful song, does one praise the saxophone, or the saxophone player? No, you praise the player. In the same way you are also to use your voice for Me. It is not how you sound; it is your interpretation of the song."

So when it came time for me to sing, I allowed the Lord to use me as I had put aside all pride, prejudice, and selfishness, and surely the Lord blessed. People's hearts were moved, and many people began to think of God. Not me, but God. Some people even praised me for the "good singing," but I could not accept any of the praise because I was just God's Instrument.

Daniel Williams

Prepared for a Mission

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.
Jeremiah.1:5 (RSV)*

Even though at times we don't know what God has in store for us, we should be confident that no matter what happens, He is preparing us for a mission.

It was a rainy November day of my sophomore year at college, when a string of so-called "bad luck" hit. I had just left campus after taking a "not so good" test when a drunken man hit my car from behind. The guy who ran into my car had neither driver's license nor car insurance, and the police already wanted him for some previous charges. Even though I was not injured, this accident caused my spirits to drop dreadfully. However, this was not the end. Within six days, a lady ran a stop sign and hit my car again. By this time the car was totally disabled. I had no way to get back and forth to school, and it seemed as if I had no one to turn to. I went through a series of "whys." It seemed the minute I started trying to do what was right, trouble started. Two car accidents, a couple of deaths, lost friends, and a bad report card later, I began to feel that even God Himself was against me. Then

it happened.

One Saturday at church I began to feel as if I was wasting my time doing right, so I decided just to have fun. However, this Sabbath God had something else in store for me. Dynamic Praise sang Daryl Coley's "He's Preparing Me." In an instant, I realized why I was experiencing so many problems. God was trying to get me ready for something that I did not know. Imagine that, God loved me so much He decided to allow me to go through troubling situations so that I would one day see Him face to face. As the choir sang, a text came to me, "For all things work together for good to them that love the Lord." (Romans 8:28) Suddenly, I felt peaceful. God had sent a word to me!

If you are going through a trying experience, remember that God has a plan for you. He loves you so much that He's allowing you, His loved one, and the one He died for, to be tried in the fire so that you might come forth as pure gold. God has to get all the impurities out of His people. So be confident that through everything, even the hardest times of your life, He's still there preparing you for a Mission.

Bradford Campbell

My Story, My Song

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Psalms 103:1 (RSV)

Music has played a major role in my being at this college, and is a very powerful force in my life. In tough times, it has soothed my gentle heart, and so I am "counted blessed."

One beautiful Sabbath morning, I was unhappy with how things were going with my family. My daughter was developing attitude problems, and her attitude began to affect her brother. The constant battle between my daughter and me led to yelling back and forth, and I wanted Satan out of our home. He was trying to break up our home. I felt as though time was slowly running out.

While getting dressed for church, (to soothe my mind) I began listening to Commissioned – "On the Winning Side." They sang to me about how Jesus keeps blessing us despite ourselves. Then I realized that I could depend on Him, for only what I do for Christ will last. Everything that I do on my own will fail. I also listened to a group, The Winans – "All Out," where they sang about Christ going the extra mile; showing

that His love never dies.

I reflected on the vast variety of selections by musical artists that really helped me to hold on. To name a few, Kirk Franklin's – "I Need you More and More," Helen Baylor's "Into the Sea of Forgetfulness," Daryl Coley's "Removal of the Mask." The list goes on and on. I finished dressing and was seen on my way to church. While at church, I had the opportunity to listen to E.E. Cleveland. He spoke about how we cannot be like Christ, that He was sinless and that our process is a day-by-day process. Along with the blessings I got from the music, I also received a double portion from the speaker.

I then decided that I needed a change within me in order to change what was going on around me. I wanted my family to experience the spiritual joy that I had found over twenty years ago. After talking to the Lord and listening as he gave me the GO, I quit my job in Atlanta, Georgia and moved to Huntsville, Alabama. Here my daughter has:

- Changed her attitude greatly
- Become a strict vegetarian
- Lowered the length of her hem-line
- Studied the Bible more
- Lost weight (over 50 lbs.)
- Talked without lots of yelling
- Enjoyed attending church and
- Talked about wanting to be saved when Jesus comes.

Thank You, Jesus!

This is my story and this is my song, I am "counted blessed"! When was the last time you counted your blessings? Try it today.

Angela Russell

A New Beginning

In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success. Proverbs 3:6 (Living Bible)

In the months preceding my arrival at college, I could barely keep still. In fact, as the day of my departure approached, I began to have insomnia. My nights were spent anticipating the many new experiences that I would encounter in college.

JoyNotes! ♪♪

Playing the drums for Dynamic Praise had been a dream of mine for a long time and when it became a reality, I felt that I was walking on the clouds. When the reality of all the work I would have to put in to actually become a true member of the band hit home, I became even more focused on being the best drummer Dynamic Praise ever had. My efforts were rewarded when I was selected to accompany the choir on a trip to Detroit. Just sitting on the bus and getting to know some of the members in the choir made me feel like I was special. That to me was a great experience.

I have been in choirs for as long as I can remember. I have been to hundreds of rehearsals, but Dynamic Praise rehearsal puts all those other rehearsals to shame. It made the work I had put into all the other choirs seem like foolish labor. At our choir practices before we start singing we have worship. Now our worship could last for an hour. The length of the worship does not really matter, because our purpose is to get in tune with God before we start praising Him in song.

This was the first time that I had seen a group of my peers place so much importance on worship. I had many more meaningful worship sessions since I stepped on Oakwood's campus than I have had in my whole life. Realizing worship holds such a high value at college is a totally new experience for me. This was my new beginning. Find one for yourself and let the Lord bless you.

Andre Denham

Total Praise

O Lord, I will praise You with all my heart, and tell everyone about the marvelous things You do. Psalm 9:1 (Living Bible)

Freshman Orientation signaled the beginning of my college experience full of bright new faces with big dreams. The week was full of exciting events and activities in order to build our school spirit and create new friendships. Orientation meant more to me than games and socialization, but I was beginning to walk my first steps of freedom and I felt that I was prepared for any challenge. Then I discovered that one of the many challenges that I would have to face would need more than personal effort - I would need the work of the Holy Spirit within me. This effort would incorporate my Total Praise.

Walking one evening with my roommate, we began to discuss our goals and aspirations as college freshmen. I began to tell my new friend that I always wanted to join "Dynamic Praise" choir. I remembered watching them as a child thinking that they were more than sing-

ers; they were ministers of the Lord. To me they were. My friend nodded her head and replied "Amma, if it is God's will He will find a way for you to be a part of this choir." We continued to talk and like a bolt of heavenly lighting our laughter stopped as we gazed at an advertisement that read: "Dynamic Praise choir rehearsal and auditions. Individuals that would like to be a part of this choir, please come for auditions at 3:00 p.m. Tuesday."

"Amma, this is the answer to your prayer!" replied my roommate. She spoke for a moment as if she were not just ordinary human being but as a prophetess. "Oh...yeah!" I said, suddenly the thought of auditioning before a crowd of unfamiliar faces that had musical experience and expertise did not seem as enticing as I had dreamed. "Amma, you know that you can sing and besides, with a voice like yours you are sure to be accepted as a member of this choir."

"Yeah? ...I guess you're right!" I told my roommate in a voice of confidence that my heart did not quite confirm.

That night, before I went to bed, I told the Lord the matter that burdened my heart. "Lord, I came here to receive an education and have the most memorable experience; but I am scared, Lord. I have always wanted to join Dynamic Praise but the thought of singing in front of many people makes my pulse race. Lord, I am only asking for You to be with me when I sing and to make my voice develop into the melody of your grace and goodness." I went to bed no longer haunted by my fear. Now, I relied on the Lord to guide me in the path that He wanted me to take.

The next day, I walked into the audition area and sang the first song that came through my lips "Perfect Praise" (otherwise known as "How Excellent"). I could feel my musical coach, the Holy Spirit, guiding me through each word, note and breath mark. When I was finished singing, I knew that it was not I that had sung, but the Holy Spirit. That Friday, the last day of orientation and freshmen consecration, I looked at the board and saw the list of new members of Dynamic Praise. Under the Alto section, I saw my name. It was then that God revealed to me that He had a purpose and a plan for every one of His children.

Music is one of the many forms of expression through which God can reveal to His children how much He loves them. I guess the main reason that people enjoy singing is that we can express commitment to the Most High - our Total Praise.

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." Proverbs 16:3, NIV.

Amma Griffin

Sharing in the Joys of Service

O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation! Psalm 95:1 (RSV)

Have you ever felt “emotionally yucky?” You have been gone for two whole days, feeling like a jerk because no one realized that you were gone. Your best friend barely acknowledged your presence this morning in the café and there were only three messages on your voice mail and two of them were from the message center.

That day, I was having an especially “emotionally yucky” feeling. I went through the day questioning the Lord. I got a little relief when I was in class not thinking about all the things that were wrong in my life. I was focusing on music, which brought me joy. The class however, did not make it better though. When I left the class, I still had a heavy heart, which I tried to ignore. I tried talking to a friend about it. When that did not work, I tried to occupy myself with homework, which did not work either.

Walking around for a while, I could only think about my so-called pathetic situation. Then I remembered that dwelling on one’s own problem creates depression; but I still did not know what to do. Was it wrong to feel this way? Is not your best friend the one you count on for all the attention you need? I did not know how to get this awful feeling out of my gut.

I was almost at the point of tears when I remembered a Haiti Mission meeting that I was to attend. Throughout the meeting, though I still felt yucky. At the end my professor requested that someone lead out in singing a song in Creole. I happened to be on the music committee, but I was not a leader. I had made a promise to the Lord that if He ever asked me to sing for His glory I would. That night I knew my voice was not all that great, but I stood up and led out anyway. When I sat down the awful feeling was gone. On my way to the library later I found in my heart a joy that I could not measure, but I knew exactly where it came from. The Lord had sent me a blessing because I had used my musical talent to serve others.

I wanted someone to show me some attention. That night I learned that our happiness does not come from receiving, but from sharing with others the talents God has given us. Have you shared yours lately? Try it. You will find that it works.

Amanda Ambrose

From Homesickness Unto Praise

*Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto His name;
for it is pleasant. Psalm 135:3*

The first week of my freshman year at Oakwood College was not as difficult an adjustment as that of other students. That is, if you call leaving the room only for classes an easy adjustment. It would be days until my first meal in the cafeteria. I was very shy. By Friday, I had called my parents to come for me. I told them about my one-week college experience. I felt I had had enough of the "College Experience" and I needed to come back home. Before I got off the phone with my parents, my dad asked me what was the highlight of the evenings. I mumbled something about the AYS service. After much debating, he convinced me to go. I complained, grumbled and decided not to go despite what I told my father. Unfortunately, well fortunately, my friends burst into my room and demanded that I go to AYS and get over my homesickness.

As my friends and I entered the skating rink, we were greeted with the warm sounds of students singing "Glory, Glory." We found ourselves seated in the front middle section. I looked around noting that I had a lot in common with everyone there. No, it was not that we were all black, but we all were sharing the joy of praising God. For the opening song we sang "How Excellent." Suddenly, I felt goose bumps on my arms and legs. My homesickness melted away and I knew that I had found at college a new "home."

To most people, music is an everyday thing. We hear it, but sometimes we do not listen with our hearts to the words that have meaning. Sometimes we do not appreciate the way it moves us. As a new student at college the song service at AYS made me feel a part of a large family. This was my first memorable experience, one of many to come making me feel at home.

Sometimes though we hurt, we forget our pain when we give praise to God. We forget our problems and our trials when we sing or play to glorify Him. Most of the time, after praising God, our problems do not seem that bad. I returned to my room with a different feeling at 11:35pm. I woke up my parents and told them that maybe my college career was not quite over. I changed from homesickness to praise.

Matilda Bediako

Angelic Voices

*Praise the Lord. . . Praise Him, all His angels, praise Him,
all His hosts! Psalms 148:1, 2 (RSV)*

One event, A.Y.S. at my college on a Friday night at the beginning of my college experience, is unforgettable. Having just gone through the tedious process of registration, I was in serious need of some stress relief. Here I was in another part of the world, among people many of whom I had never seen before and others that I had grown up with. I felt as if I was a stranger in a foreign land. As I proceeded to the skating rink for the night's activities, I noticed that the gathering of students was indeed large. To my amazement, the skating rink was packed.

There seemed to be a bolt of electricity running through the room. The place was full of energy, friends laughing and talking and students greeting one another. The program opened with prayer. Little did I know that the next part of the program would captivate my mind and remain in my memory for years to come. The service continued with a lively song service. The first song selection was, "How Excellent," one of my favorite songs. I was happy with the selection because I used to sing in my church's youth choir before attending this school. What happened next was too beautiful for words. As the student body began to sing, my heart and soul came alive as never before. Not only was there harmony amongst the vast crowd, but also there was sincerity of heart. As we came down to the end of the song, I found myself wiping away tears of joy because the Holy Spirit had captured and would forever keep my heart at this college.

At that first A.Y.S. meeting I realized that God had placed me here. The song service that night nurtured and watered my soul more than anything else had for a long time. The possibility of over 200 black youth in the same room singing and praising the Lord without one incident or altercation was mind boggling for me. That fact combined with the angelic voices singing praises to the Lord will forever be a memory of the presence of the God that resides here on the campus of Oakwood College.

Marshall Frett, Jr.

The Lord Be Praised

*Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. . .
Psalm 48:1 (The Clear Word)*

When pondering the subject of one of the most impressionable musical experiences that I have had, many instances immediately come to mind. However, the event that I treasure most was the trip to Southern College. Something horrible had rocked my institution the day before: the untimely death of my good friend Cedric Osborne. I can remember when I heard the news of his death. I found out on Friday that he had died that Thursday. First of all, I was upset that no one had called me the night that it happened and I was also upset that I did not get to say goodbye to Cedric. This was one of the darker, more confusing times in my life.

As a result, the night of the concert in Collegedale, Tennessee at Southern College, I was in a horrible state. I can remember toward the end of the concert, the music professor announced the song, The Lord be Praised. I remember some of my choir friends telling me that when they found out about Cedric, someone put on the Aeolians tape and played this particular song. Therefore, this brought back the remembrance of my sorrow about Cedric's sudden death. When Anika began to sing, the tears streamed down my face and all I could see was Cedric's face in my mind. It was more that I could take because I broke down during the song. Yet, all of a sudden a gentle peace came across my soul as I began to pull myself out of my depressed state. I listened to the words of the song. The song told my soul to accept the Lord's will, praise Him and Him only through whatever experience I pass through in life.

This was one of my most influential musical experiences, not just at this college, but was one of the most touching experiences in my life. Even though I miss my friend, I feel grateful that the Lord sent me comfort when I asked and as soon as I needed it. The Lord be praised.

Rebekah Davis

A Blessing Through Music

Blessed be the God . . . of all comfort who comforteth us in all our tribulations that we may be able to comfort them... in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. 2 Cor.1:3, 4

Last Sabbath there was a Youth Choir concert at the college church. I missed church service earlier that morning, so I decided to attend the Youth Choir program. Since all my friends were telling me how they were blessed by the music, I wanted to get a blessing, too. At first, I really was not feeling great. I was thinking about leaving because I didn't recognize anyone in the choirs, and I really wasn't getting into the music. Then I realized why I had come. I came to get a blessing. So I started to look at the bright side of things. The songs made me think about the sacrifice Jesus made for us when He died on the cross.

As the concert proceeded, I was just happy to be a child of God and happy that I had another chance to give my life to God. I cannot remember the name of the song, but the theme was about us Christians being ready for Jesus' Second Coming. We will be rejoicing to see Him because we are tired of this life. When it was time to leave I felt peaceful to know that no matter what I do, Jesus loves me.

Through this experience, I was reminded that all I need to do is give my best and let God do the rest. Even though I missed the sermon, I received a blessing through music. Music is such a blessing because no matter what you're going through you can find comfort.

Robert Edwards

Music Therapy

My servants shall sing for joy of heart. Isaiah 65:14

Perhaps the driving force that led me to this college was the musical atmosphere. I had heard the Aeolians sing on several occasions in Atlanta, Georgia, and decided that I wanted to attend the school that cultivated such heavenly music. Little did I know that the Aeolians were just the surface of what this college had to offer musically.

After a long week of waking up early to attend classes, studying late into the night, taking tests and quizzes and turning in papers, I

often looked forward to Friday evenings. My love for Fridays is not only because of the Sabbath that will follow, but it is also the evening of AYS. The main reason most students, including myself, attend AYS is to participate in the lively and uplifting song service. Even though I might have had a difficult week or I might have taken a particularly difficult test, singing and listening to everyone else sing at AYS helped to lift my spirits, to relax me, and to create a new and refreshed spirit that I can draw from for the new week.

Never had I heard such spiritually uplifting music anywhere else. Before I came to Oakwood College I had listened to a wide range of music. Most of it was not necessarily evil or bad, yet, that music did little for me though I listened constantly, and that was the last thing I wanted to hear in my time of need. The music I listened to was a good booster that lifted me when I was already happy, but when I was sad, it was completely useless to me. But at Oakwood I appreciated music, not only for recreational purposes, but as therapy that helped to ease the pain of my aching heart.

As a science major, I became discouraged sometimes when I saw very little progress in the work that I had put extra time into. When I felt like this, I usually headed straight for my dorm room, closed the door and sat in darkness. If the telephone rang, I would usually do answer it; if a friend knocked on the door, I would not open it. In an effort to heal, I would turn to my Bible, read a devotional, and listen to religious music. This combination never failed me.

When there is no one else to talk with, or when I do not feel like talking to anyone, the lyrics of a particular song always seems to permeate and sooth. Music, like a good friend, is always there whenever needed. I experienced "music" therapy at my college.

Zoe Checkley

Anthology of Praise

Praise ye the Lord... Praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

Psalm 150:1, 2, 6

I shall never forget the rich musical-spiritual experience that depicted God's presence in my life here at Oakwood College. I talk

about it often.

My particular experience started when I heard about the "Anthology of Praise". The Madison Mission Choir & Friends concert would be held at Whitesburg Baptist Church, here in Huntsville. For about two weeks I listened to the advertisement about the Madison Mission Choir & Friends concert on the radio. I saw the fliers posted all over the campus. I saw the students selling tickets; I even heard about the free tickets that were to be given out to some students. Even with all these enticements I was not impressed to go until I learned that there was to be a live recording, a video that would make history in this newly formed Adventist congregation.

Only a day before the concert, I began to pray to the Lord to allow me to attend the concert. Finally, on the day of the concert I found a babysitter to keep my children since my husband had to work. He would not want me to miss something like this even if he did not have to work. My babysitter dropped me off at the concert. I paid for my ticket at the door, went in, and found a comfortable seat.

The concert started after a prayer of praise by the leading minister. The opening song was one of my favorites, "How Excellent." I enjoyed seeing my people perform in a way that was spiritually uplifting. I loved all the special guests, like Mark and Joel Kibble of "Take 6", Lisa Paige of "Witness," and "Virtue". I especially liked the song "Mighty God" sung by the choir.

I was encouraged spiritually. My faith was rejuvenated. I left this concert knowing that God's presence had been there, and my soul had been blessed. I returned home saying to myself, "Praise the Lord, ye his saints, ye ministers that do His pleasures." Praise ye the Lord.

Corzetta Underwood

The Deaf Shall Hear My Song

*By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually,
... the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to
communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Hebrew
13: 15, 16*

Before I came to Oakwood College, I believed that listening to secular music had no influence on my spiritual life. I did not realize that by entertaining that type of music, I was allowing Satan to corrupt my mind and influence my thinking. I was allowing him to enter my life because even though I thought Satan's words had no influence on me,

I was allowing the same ignorance I showed towards his music to also be shown toward God's music; I was not listening to the message.

We sometimes do not realize the impact that music has. Music affects our emotions without us even realizing it. The evil one uses music to corrupt minds because he knows that we all love music and we all respond to certain sounds. It was not until I came to Oakwood that I realized I had to monitor what I allowed my ears to hear. It was then, that I received a blessing whenever I sang and uplifted the name of God.

I first joined the choir because I enjoyed singing. I never expected to touch someone's life positively or receive a blessing myself each time I sang a song. However, each time I sang a song, whether at church or in my room, it was a testimony of my life. Never before have these songs held such meaning for me. Songs such as "I Shall Wear a Crown," or "How Excellent," I sang with open praise.

The Madison Mass choir has been an even bigger blessing from God. The message of each song was always powerful and uplifting. One particular song that has had an everlasting impact on me is "Open Praise." This song gives God thanks and praise for all the marvelous things He has done and continues to do. It made me think of how much I sometimes take God for granted. God did not have to wake me and provide me with parents who love and care enough about me to send me to Oakwood College. All this and even more, God did in kindness and grace toward me, yet I still failed to give Him His fullest praise.

Songs here at Oakwood College hold meaning for me because the Lord has touched me and opened my ears so I may hear His message. All this I gained because I refused to listen to an abundance of secular music realizing songs hold meaning and that some are even testimonies of other people's lives that I can apply to mine. But without prayer, and the Oakwood experience, my eyes would never have been opened. Now, I sing heartily to God in "open praise." Even the deaf shall hear my song.

April Watlington

"I'd Rather Have Jesus, Than Silver and Gold"

*What profit is there in gaining the whole world and all the good things of this life if it causes you to lose your own soul?
Mark 8:36 (The Clear Word)*

When I was home in Philadelphia, I used to sing in a female quartet called De JA Vu. We sang some gospel but mostly R & B. I grew up with one of the girls in the group whose father was our producer. So we were all very close and considered as family. Several years ago, her father made a gospel album called "Jericho." Now he is trying to make an R & B album with his daughter and other girls.

Before I left home to come to Oakwood College, I was on my way to popularity in the secular music world. De JA Vu had performed at private parties for celebrities, sang for NBA games, had made several recordings and other things. It was the life that most teenagers wish to have. I longed to get picked up in limousines and go to concerts, where we stayed back stage with the stars. People took our pictures for newspapers clippings, and interviewed us for magazines. I guess it is safe to say, I was living the first stage or the premature version of "The Glamorous Life." However, true riches are the treasures which the Lord withholds in heaven. Because De JA Vu was run by one whom I (along with many others) looked up to, and also considered family, I assumed that this life of entertainment, glamour and fast cash, was appropriate. What could possibly be wrong with us trying to make a little money by singing what would sell?

We, as individuals in the group, were asked (actually, our parents were asked) to sign a contract to confirm the group De JA Vu. My mother is a beautiful, intelligent and concerned parent and examines thoroughly everything that concerns her children. She is also a lawyer's assistant, and being the mother that she is, she submitted the contract to her boss, our friend, who meticulously, examined it. As a result of his skillfully scrutinizing the document, he found a number of unacceptable biased statements. My mother presented the contract (as her boss had marked it) to my managers and asked for them to negotiate. They did not respond, and the contract remained as it was. So it was obvious that they did not agree to what was recommended by my lawyer.

My mother voiced her opinion of the group to me (which was

not in harmony with mine at the time). I listened, but did not really want to hear what she had to say. I know that my mother always spoke words of wisdom, and that she would never withhold something worth having from either my brother or me. So I thought about what she suggested over and over again, and the question "To live the glamorous life or to be real with God?" continually played in my mind.

As I was riding to school on the bus, a song in particular came to mind. I was trying to convince myself that there was nothing wrong with what I was doing. I was in fact confusing myself. The Lord gave me the song "I'd Rather Have Jesus Than Silver and Gold." Why did He give me this song? I did not want to know the truth, so this caused me to be upset with God for making my decision so apparent. No longer could I go to rehearsal on Friday nights and go to church that Saturday. No longer could I perform a medley for church one weekend, and perform one for ungodly purposes the next weekend. I had to be either hot or cold. There is no middleman with God.

Once the song was revealed to me, my decision was quite evident. After being in a state of depression for about a month, I decided to separate myself from the group, to connect myself with God. I was then asked to return all of my outfits and shoes, which were for group performances and that really hurt coming from family. "Why did God take away from me what I loved to do so much?" I often wondered. For a long time, I did not understand God's plan. Then it hit me. God is so complex, that it is impossible for any living thing to even try to comprehend Him. So I simply asked God for two things: replace De JA Vu with something ten times better and give me peace of mind and contentment with my decision.

Here at Oakwood, the Lord made me a part of a wonderful choir called Dynamic Praise. He has shown me that He is the only example to follow. No friend, family or a pastor's life is even worth trying to follow. God knows. God is. And God will. He always sees His children through whatever the circumstances may be. God gave me an alternative and reason to believe that I made the right choice, the best choice.

Nickeea Chalmers

Live a Life of Praise, Don't Wear a Mask

...worship in spirit and in truth. John 4:24

The only thing that the Christian community can do that no one else in the world can do is to praise its Source. That is why the Church's gatherings for worship dare never lose God as the subject and object of praise. Living a life of praise involves openly being true and honest with ourselves. It is imperative that we empty our souls to God like a child who empties the last dregs of a glass and anxiously waits for more. So it is that we wait on our Heavenly Father to give us the water of life that we will never want more. The warrior David, known as the man after God's own heart, knew how to do this well. Psalm 108:1-5 presents David honoring and praising God for numerous blessings:

Our God, I am faithful to you with all my heart, and you can trust me. I will sing and play music for you with all that I am. I will start playing my harps before the sun rises. I will praise you, Lord, for everyone to hear; I will sing hymns to you in every nation. Your love reaches higher than the heavens, and your loyalty extends beyond the clouds. Our God, may you be honored above the heavens; may your glory be seen everywhere on earth.

To praise the Lord with your whole heart is the most selfless act you can experience in your life. Sometimes our prayers contain a bit of selfishness, even if the asking is on behalf of others. On the other hand, praise is a gift freely given in adoration of the awesome God. It demands a reverent attitude of the body, a focused mind, an energetic emotion from the heart, and a submissive spirit. Our songs and words are uttered with no expectation of getting something in return. When we praise God in total sincerity, we bare our souls to Him. We hide nothing from Him. He sees us as we truly are.

As artists, poets, writers, and musicians, we are always giving of ourselves. We present ourselves in many ways to those who dare to venture into our space. We expose ourselves in such a way that others become more attuned to who we really are. The more we give of ourselves, the more we will receive from our audience. In addition we will have greater impact upon those around us. This impact can be of one of two forces: (1) positive unmasked (no pretense) or (2) negative masked (pretense specifically designed to deceive).

It is a very sad affair indeed to observe a phony artist or one who is not credible. God wants us to be real in whatever we do. He

does not want us to wear a mask! The wearing of a mask does nothing for our inmost soul, does nothing for the people with whom we live, and does nothing for the people with whom we work. In giving God the highest praise we cannot afford to wear a mask. God can see right through the core of our being. The poet laureate Paul Lawrence Dunbar states:

We wear the mask that grins and lies
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes...,
We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile
But let the world dream otherwise

For centuries it was not safe for many of our fore parents to be their true selves. Now, people will say that many of us are not being our true selves. We have played specific roles and have hidden behind masks. There is always a real danger in living behind the mask.

We sometimes grin through pain, lying about our true feelings. Our fore bearers were locked into masks they did not want, but now we have the freedom to express ourselves. It is a joy to come from behind the masks and be the bright, expressive people that God has made.

As artist, poets, writers and musicians who use language to paint mental images, we do not have to wear a mask. We can be free as God intended. Live a life of Praise and let it be seen in your work. In so doing let God use you and your work to be a blessing to others. You might not see the rewards of your work here and now on this earth, but in the words of a lyricist "what we do for Christ will last." Our reward is assured. Eternal life is an everlasting inheritance and a home with God the One who sustains us and makes it possible for us to live a life of praise. Artists, to thyself be true; do not wear a mask. Live a life of praise!

Prayer: Lord, in our work as artist, poets, writers, and musicians, we want to give You all the praise. Take our gifts that You have entrusted and show us how we can best use them to praise and glorify Your name always.

Audley C. Chambers

4 *The Cup*



The Social Experience

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*E*xcept the Lord build the house,

they labor in vain that build it:

Except the Lord keep the city,

the watchman waketh but in vain.

Psalm 127:1

Atmosphere

The tide turns while the wind swings through the atmosphere
My heart slowly quivers with courageous fear
Thinking that one day you might not be near;
Listening to you as you say goodbye
Holding on to the glimpses of the sky
Remembering two stars one in each eye;
I look forward to the nights to dream of you
Getting to know you better and understanding what is true
Telling you things that will be secret between us and
Sharing honey sweet memories that will bond like eternal glue;
Tasting that salt of delightful tears
Praying that I'm the only person you will hear
I solemnly want to dwell in the secret place
of your everlasting atmosphere...

"It is He that... stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain. Isaiah 40:22

Anthony D. Harvey Jr.

Snowy Day in Huntsville

The sun was shining and the sky was clear
And it was a beautiful day that seemed bright and fair;
SO the people frolicked in their usual way,
Because they predicted no snow that day.
Some went inside with their faces beaming with pride,
Because they really believed they had predicted the sky.

I too believed what they predicted that day,
So I went shopping for things on display.
But while on the outside I happened to look,
I saw snow floating from every nook.
It fell and fell and began to freeze right there,
And everyone was gripped with fear.

The drivers began to worry and pine,
Cause they had to drive slowly in one line;
Their cars had four tires and a spare,
Yet each one had to steer with care.
Policemen gave no tickets that day,
Cause no one was speeding anyway.

So on January tenth that day,
When Mother Nature gave some snow away,
Everyone knew it wasn't time to play,
Cause it really wasn't a good Friday.
So I dropped my head and began to pray,
"Please, dear Father, send the snow away."

The snow came on God's positive time,
It showed everyone that His prediction is prime.
He has also predicted a Judgment Day,
And it may not be a friendly display;
If we continue to predict things our way.
So let's not waste precious time away,
Cause we may be stranded on God's Judgment Day.

*He giveth snow like wool...who can stand before His cold...praise ye
the Lord. Psalms 147:16, 17, 20*

Cecelia Lewis

A Time to Gain and a Time to Lose

*To every thing there is a season...A time to get, and a time to lose.
Ecclesiastes. 3:1, 6*

It was a dream come true for me to attend Oakwood College. Much praying and hard work brought me here. My first two weeks on the campus were pleasant and enjoyable until that Thursday, January 14, 1998, when it all changed.

There had been plenty of talk about intramural basketball. Basketball is a game I can play quite well, but I was unsure about how I would compete against the local talent. Not having the intention of playing on a team, I suddenly changed my mind much to my regret

later. A freshman in Peterson Hall asked if I was interested in playing on his team. For some reason I said "yes." "Be prepared to play tonight," was his response.

Our team consisted of six Canadians and one American. Entering the gym for our exhibition game, we prepared ourselves for game time. Having a team prayer and quick warm-up, we stepped onto the court for our first game. The first few minutes were scoreless until I made the first and only basket of the game. Watching our team play was like viewing an episode of bloopers. We missed easy passes and easy points. Being embarrassed was not all. The spectators were laughing and making fun of us. I was happy when the game was finally over. That night my confidence and self-respect were nowhere to be found. From that point on, I felt fear when I thought about that night in the gym.

Now I understand the text of Ecclesiastics 3:6, which says, "There is a time to gain and time to lose." There was a reason we came out defeated in our first game. I tried to comprehend why it happened. I guess we trusted in ourselves too much. Now I have learned that I have to trust God in any situation. He knows what is best for each of us. That means we need to learn to be patient and to let Him lead the way. He is our Way-maker. Trust Him at all times. He is the victory we seek.

Klevon Houston

A Newfound Friend

A true friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need. Proverbs 17:17 (Living Bible)

When I settled in at Oakwood College, I did not know what to expect. I had visited the attractive campus during college days; yet, I was not sure how I could live away from my home and family. I began to worry. What was once a strong heart turned into one of uncertainty and fear; my greatest fear- my peers. Would they accept me? What would they think of me? All of my worries, however, changed when I met Melvick, my first Oakwood friend.

Early in the morning at freshman orientation that we shook hands. The student body was divided into groups according to the first letter of the last name and Melvick was a member of my squad. As we shared a little about ourselves, we found that we had similar interests

even though we were from different backgrounds. We carried on our conversation and I guess you can say that we fast became friends.

One evening we planned on meeting some new faces, especially females. In fact, we planned on meeting as many females as we could in one night. I was happy that the U.S.M. organization was sponsoring a "block party" for the freshmen, so we would not be denied our mission. When it was over we knew so many good Oakwood people.

The friendship between Melvick and me grew further when we talked about the goodness of the Lord and I praised His glorious name. Melvick explained to me how God had called him to be a pastor and his witness touched my heart. We both discussed how college life would be different, but that God would see us through.

Some people say that a college friend is a friend for life and I believe this is true. I know that our friendship continues to grow as well as our faith in God. We count on each other. Better than that, we know that our first, last and best friend is Jesus who loveth at all times. Through our friendship we have developed a deeper and more lasting friendship in our newfound friend, Jesus.

Stephen Mills

The Winter Quest

*While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest and
cold and heat...shall not cease. Genesis 8:22*

Canada is a country known for its drastic seasonal changes. Seasonal changes are more distinct in Canada than they are in the southern United States, and attending Oakwood College made me understand what erratic seasonal weather is like. I believed at first that Huntsville, Alabama, would have a predominantly warm climate during the winter season, but I changed my mind when I experienced the winter storm of that year. School was great that day, but the weather was horrible. It was raining and the air was somewhat hot, heavy and suffocating. The weather report said that there was a severe blizzard on its way to Huntsville. In Canada blizzards are severe, and often result in the loss of life to members of many communities.

When the blizzard hit Huntsville, almost everything in the city of Huntsville shut down, including Oakwood College. The cafeteria hours became chaotic and hungry men, like my roommates and I,

could not survive without food. We decided to make an excursion to the mall by traveling across the cornfield behind the school farm. At the mall we would buy groceries that could last us for the duration of the storm.

After approximately twenty minutes of muddy walking, we reached our destination. The roads were slippery, so there were not many people going to the mall. The supermarket was open and we were intent on buying our favorite food items, mostly junk food. As it turned out, we were not the only Oakwoodites to venture out to "Food World." We all waited nearly three hours for a response from a taxi service. As we waited for a cab to come we stumbled upon an Oakwood student. We knew the person, but we felt it was "uncool" for us to ask for a ride. So we watched the girls leave the mall parking lot, and stood at Food World another half-hour waiting for a cab to roll by. The cab never came, so we returned the same way we came, by foot. Upon returning to our rooms we thought about the excursion we had made; we gave thanks for our safe return to the campus.

Life is like that; when things go wrong in our lives, we have to give thanks for strength, courage, perseverance and success just as we were moved to give thanks for our successful winter quest.

Francis Marcellin

Broadened Horizon

Make it your aim to live quiet and orderly lives, minding your own business and working to earn an honest living as we have taught you to do. 1 Thessalonians 4:11 (The Clear Word)

Coming from a public school, I was highly inclined to submit to peer pressure, and ignore academic opportunities at hand. At Oakwood, I began learning how to achieve greater goals academically to broaden my horizon.

The goal of broadening my horizon allowed me to equip myself with the good sense of associating with friends who put academic goals first and took school seriously. While in the process of doing this, I soon learned that the difference between socially and academically inclined college students at Oakwood is the students' purpose. The purpose of the academically inclined college student is to succeed and to achieve through hard work and perseverance, whereas the social college students has, most often, come just to be away from home and

to get their “party on.”

As a result of my new friends, steps to academic achievements began to surface. I signed up in tutoring for most of my classes. I developed good study habits that had not been there before. Most important was I finally starting to be happy with my personal and academic growth.

Looking back, I realize that through my Oakwood experience, which included people in social and academic life, my academic achievements improved and my horizon was broadened to the point of distinction and success.

I discovered that once I included God in my everyday life, I developed a new outlook and a broader horizon.

Tonshea McBath

Ambassadors

*We are Christ's ambassadors...as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, receive the love he offers you- be reconciled to God.
2 Corinthians 5:20 (Living Bible)*

In our lifetime, there are many roles that we take on such as parent, child, spouse, friend, Christian, and the list goes on and on. One role that is often overlooked is that of an ambassador. An ambassador is defined as a personal representative or messenger.

The President's Ambassadors of Oakwood College are basically representatives of the school. I have had the privilege to be a part of this influential group. When I was first asked to participate in this organization, I was flattered and began to think about the responsibility that would accompany the position. Through my role as a President's Ambassador, I have come to realize that being a representative of anything carries a great responsibility.

Then I began to think of myself as a more important representative, as a representative of Christ. No matter where we go or what we do, whether we like it or not, we are representing someone, either Christ or Satan. It is our duty then to be positive examples to the world so that people may see Christ in us and be drawn to Him. Don't worry about not being capable to accomplish what He asks of you. When you are doing the Lord's will, He will give you all of the necessary tools to finish His work.

Christ always gives us the opportunity to decide for ourselves

the path that we want to follow. This is a demonstration of true love. He does not force anyone to serve Him. In the end, the choice is ours as to who we want to represent. He claims us as His own, so let us be proud to claim Him and bring the well-deserved, glory and honor to His name by representing Him well since we are His ambassadors.

Heather Lowe

Double Impact

Behold, I will do a new thing...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:19

An experience that had impacted my life was the time I could not find a ride home to Miami, Florida, during the Thanksgiving break.

It was a week before the 1997 Thanksgiving break at Oakwood College. I needed to find a ride to Atlanta, Georgia, so I could catch my flight from Atlanta to Miami. I asked a few people from the area of Atlanta if they were going back? They all replied with the same answer:

"Yes, but my car is full."

So here I was in my room sobbing on the phone to my mother that I could not find a ride to Atlanta and I would not be able to come home for the Thanksgiving break. After I got off the phone with my mother, I went to the cafeteria to eat lunch. I saw a good friend of mine from Miami. He asked me if I was going home. I told him that I wanted to but I could not find a ride to Atlanta for my flight. He said that he was going to Atlanta to see his uncle and he had room in his car for one more person. My heart was filled with joy. I rushed to my room packed up all my items and he came and picked me up from my dorm. I took the next flight out to Miami.

That experience impacted my life very much because during those times I was praying to God asking Him to find me a way home. He answered my prayers. That day I knew that with prayer power, anything is possible through God's help.

Anonymous

NAPS: In the Heart of the Amazon

Go ... baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach them everything I've taught you. I'll always be with you. Matthew 28:19, 20 (The Clear Word)

The dips and bumps in the road had grown considerably worse since nightfall. Sitting in the back of a military truck with nothing but a thin layer of sleeping bag underneath us, we were all feeling a little more than uncomfortable. The drivers of the vehicle were drunk and smoking, judging by the high speed at which they were driving. Yet, it took us, a group of NAPS members, twenty-five hours more to reach our destination tired, extremely sore, and completely covered in red dust.

NAPS, a well-known name for the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, is a non-profit, intercollegiate, international organization with headquarters in the Biology Department of Oakwood College. NAPS functions as a volunteer relief organization. Our activities include food and clothes drives, community outreach, and foreign and local mission trips. Some of the local missions that we have done include repairing a home for an elderly couple in SoSo, Mississippi; helping tornado victims in Birmingham, Alabama; feeding the homeless and ministering to the citizens of Los Angeles, California during a Thanksgiving break. Internationally, NAPS has brought relief and hope to various villages in Haiti, Sudan, Kenya, and Guyana.

This particular trip took place one December when 19 volunteers went on NAPS' second trip to Guyana. The Lord truly blesses when His people are about His business. The Lord tells His followers to "go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you" (Matt. 28:19,20).

While on this trip, many strange things happened. For example the generator ran out of gas in the middle of a Bible study even though we had filled it just before the program began. I remember the night that we presented the Sabbath Truth. Satan brought an enormous number of horrible flies seemingly out of nowhere. They were everywhere! We prayed and praised the Lord until we were able to present the program.

Mission trips are phenomenal. They open our eyes to so much. We literally see the hand of God reach down from heaven and move in ways we never imagined. It is definitely impossible for one not to grow closer to God when on the mission field. God performs too many

miracles for Him to go unnoticed.

Mission trips are exciting and fun. I admonish everyone to jump at the chance to go on a mission trip. It takes a lot of physical and spiritual preparation, but it is certainly worth it. Do you want to have a memorable experience? Then come, join NAPS and go on one of our mission trips!

Sara B. Osi

My Oakwood Vision

...your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Acts 2:17

I came to Oakwood College with a vision. A vision, enlightened by my family, but nearly tarnished by a student. The members of my family that have attended Oakwood College predicted, "it will be an experience you will never forget." They also suggested that I cherish the years that I would spend at Oakwood, because once those years are gone, they are gone forever. I was about to leave home when my relatives made that comment. For a moment after, I stood there with a kool-aid smile from ear to ear, anticipating my journey to, and my stay at Oakwood College.

I had never been away from home longer than one week, yet it had already been four weeks since I'd been at Oakwood, though it seemed as if I had left home only yesterday. I am not mentioning that time was flying, but emphasizing the feeling of having a second family, and another home away from home. I considered teachers as my aunts and uncles, students as my cousins, and counselors as my grandparents. "I Like It Here!"

I yelled this statement as I first placed my foot on Oakwood's campus. Another student heard and pulled me aside. He predicted that I would only like it here for a couple of months and from then on it would be a downhill ride. I told him he would choke on his words. Who was he to tell me what I would like or dislike. I also took into consideration the way he looked. His appearance made me think to myself, "He is a super-duper senior," which was of no interest to me. Who would take advice from a guy that appeared to have been here for more than six years?

I was not interested in his discouraging words. I continued to enjoy my home away from home; I met new family members and I maintained the legacy of my biological family: graduating from Oakwood College. Hooray for Oakwood!

Michael Williams, Jr.

My Experience on Oakwood's Campus

*Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.
Proverbs 4:13*

The experience of being in school was not new to me but college was. I'd never liked school before but I liked it here. What you do is up to you, and you can decide what you want to be involved in. If singing is something you enjoy, then you have many opportunities to do so on this campus. There are choirs, groups or you can just sing solos, and there is always singing at AYS and other church related events. If you act, write or like to help others you can do that easily. This was the perfect opportunity for you to grow as a person and develop skills and abilities. As the Bible says, "Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might," so for college that might mean have fun, but don't let your grades suffer.

When I came to Oakwood I looked at all the clubs and groups that were available, they were many. Then I looked for groups that I was interested in and I narrowed my search from there. I wanted to join every choir and singing group on this campus, since this school is famous for its musical talent. Then I had to think about why I'm really here. The answer is simple, to get an education. So I joined one choir, and I loved it. I liked the songs we sang and also the fact that the main focus of the choir was ministry, putting God first and foremost. I joined a drama group and a few other things but they did not interfere with my education.

I learned that college was a chance for me to grow mentally, socially, and at this school spiritually as well. I had to decide to do so and think what way you will do and how you will do it. On reflection, you will have had a great experience with many memories for the future.

Quenesther Thompson

The Head Bird in Charge

He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. Genesis 8:8, 9, NKJV.

Everybody knows the story of the migration of birds. Some of these birds fly in a V-shaped formation. In this special formation, there is one that I would like to call a "head bird in charge." This bird enables all the other birds except itself to take advantage of an easier flight. This easier flight is possible because the bird in front of another bird creates an updraft and makes it easier for the birds behind them to fly. Another interesting concept about this migration is the fact that "young birds of many species undertake their first autumn migration with no guidance from experienced adults. These inexperienced birds do not necessarily reach their destinations; many birds stray in the wrong direction and are sometimes observed thousands of kilometers away from their normal route."¹

When I think about it, life as an Oakwood freshman is like the V-shaped formation. God is at the head and makes it easier for the "young birds" to fly. The next point has two concepts. Number one, unlike birds, God never gets tired, so He never will stop leading us. Number two, in migration the "head bird in charge" will get tired and fall to the back of the V. The interesting thing about point number two is that eventually the bird that falls to the end will lead again.

Another interesting point is that all the birds ahead of the last bird will lead the flock at one point in time. These "birds" I liken to everybody that influences our lives. These birds are parents, pastors, other family members, friends and especially older Oakwood students. God places these special individuals in "front of us" so that the flight we take will be a little easier. Like some of the young birds, we freshman students might stray and fall by the side but there is hope. In migration, many young birds have no guidance from experienced adults, but God promises never to leave us nor forsake us. He will always be there and He will always be the "head bird in charge!"

Chanel Sales

¹ "Bird," Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2000 ©
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My Plans for You

"...For I know the plan I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future..."

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

My experience at Oakwood College shaped my life extensively. Moreover, I would say the College itself started making me into the new person that I am becoming. I realize that it was the sole power of God in my life molding me into a new person according to the plans He has for my life. I have come to know that the same God who called me to this school of His used the means necessary to make me become a better person.

A few months ago, I was standing in my living room thinking about where my life was leading, when the Lord directed me to go to Oakwood College. I knew that the Lord had a plan for me but I could not figure it out. Looking at my talents and my challenges, I tried to rationalize what He wanted me to do. Being tired of the speech problem I had all my life, and drained from seeking information about starting a Gospel Music Business, I walked slowly around my living room praying and thinking about my life. The Lord told me, in that moment, to go to Oakwood College.

From that moment on I knew the Lord had been leading and guiding me into the special plans He had for me. I appreciate all the friends He allowed me to meet at Oakwood with whom I have been able to share some of my experiences. Experiences become much more meaningful when God sends friends who understand the various situations into which one may be placed.

I realize that the life that God wants us to live comes by our faith in His leading. As I see it, His plans for my life were being formulated daily, and this upward journey of my spiritual development I refer to as my Oakwood Experience.

Rodney O. Grissom

Far From the Rapid Pace

...come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. Mark 6:31

It was time for a break from studying. Calling the family dog, Zock, I headed for Oakwood's mountainous property, dubbed "the woods" by my family.

Where was I headed? To a 'lean-to' shelter constructed a few summers before for times such as this. There I could sing, pray, talk out loud, or just think uninterrupted. The birds would join in song, or reverently listen as I spoke to our mutual Creator and Zock was content to pant in the shade or wander around looking for dog treasures.

As Easter approached, the dogwood trees would start to gen-

tly open buds revealing four pure white petals that formed a cross. On the tip of each is a brown-red area said to represent the blood from my Savior's head, hands, and feet. The lower limbs of the dogwood tree were just right for me to climb without skinning my legs on the rough trunk. Perched on the limb I would continue my meditation and praise. Often my thoughts would go to memories of Sabbath afternoon hikes that my family took across Oakwood's mountain. On one occasion as we walked through a pasture I spotted a bull. Hastily I had my younger sister, Myra, climb on to my back so I could carry her safely. When asked why, I responded that her red hair bow would anger the bull so I was prepared to run with her to safety if the need arose. The bull, however, did not pay much attention to us.

Upon returning to Huntsville six months ago, I again visited "the woods", but was cautioned not to walk there alone. I paid my advisor no mind since I felt perfectly safe alone in nature. My efforts to locate the larger of two old reservoirs were unsuccessful, so I invited my sister, Joy, to accompany me on this important quest. The reservoirs had served as resting places as well as a source of cool spring water for refreshing.

The trail my family often traversed in years past was no longer discernable, obscured by underbrush and layers of fallen leaves. Drawing on our memories, we eventually located the "big reservoir." It was now fenced in and the underground spring that once fed it appeared to be dried up. I trust that I will never allow my relationship with The Living Water to dry up. The area is surrounded by boulders that are scattered in a fashion that would provide ready seating for outdoor programs in a nature made amphitheater.

Close by lies "the Eden trail," developed by the ecology club, Dr. Anthony Paul and the Divine Inspiration of God. This intersects an old wagon trail used by student workers years ago. From this vantage point I look to the verdant field that has replaced the corn and alfalfa I remember from age 5 through my young adult years. On the other hand, I gaze upon the carpet of fallen leaves. There wildflowers push colored blooms through the leafy carpet, reminding me that God still gives life and beauty though He allows trials so we can have victory over obstacles.

It has been raining almost continuously for the past five days so I have not had the simple pleasure of physically ambling under the canopy of the oak, dogwood, pine, cedar, and magnolia trees in "the woods". Instead, I have traversed Memory Lane to a quiet place away from the rapid pace. There God soothes my troubled mind. Then, I am prepared to face a new day with love for all.

Audrey Norman McLarty

A Friend at All Times

...there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Proverbs 18:24

It was my first year at Oakwood College and my friend, Tomeka, and her family invited me to their home in Little Rock, Arkansas, for Thanksgiving. This was very touching. I was hundreds of miles away from my Barbados home and someone was inviting me to spend this family holiday in their home.

At first I was a little apprehensive. I didn't want to be a bother, but Tomeka was so friendly and reassuring that I felt it would be a great experience for me if I went to Arkansas.

My uneasiness about taking the trip disappeared when we arrived. Her family was very loving and I felt right at home. Even the family dog seemed to develop a friendship with me. Everything was perfect. The day before we left, we took a trip to Hot Springs. We tapped some of the city's warm, underground spring water, and visited the wax museum and city's tourist shops and parks. It was beautiful.

Our departure was filled with emotional goodbyes. Tomeka's family acknowledged me as a family member and I responded likewise. In my mind I knew I had to say thank you in more than words for the hospitality, love and acceptance they had shown.

"Drive safely, and call us when you arrive," her family urged. "Be careful and watch out for road kill!" added her step-father jokingly. Then we prayed up and left with high spirits.

About four hours from Huntsville, in the middle of the highway, the drive got bumpy as if we were driving on a gravel road. We turned off on to the shoulder and discovered that our right front tire was missing. We had been blessed and the Lord was showing us that He was by our sides. We got into the car, thanked God for protecting us and asked Him to send someone to assist us with changing our tire.

Vehicles zoomed passed as we took our gallons of spring water and other items from the trunk to get our spare tire. That's when another prayer was answered. A car stopped behind us and a tall, dark stranger hopped out, asking if he could be of assistance. His wife, seated in the back seat, spotted us and they decided to stop. Our spare tire (donut) was flat and the stranger, who lived in the area, directed us to the nearest gas station to have it inflated. Thank God it was just one minute away.

At the gas station we could not get air into the tire. Four young

men, seeing our difficulty, offered to help us. Tomeka and I looked at each other, checked to see that all the doors were locked, before we said yes. They stated they would have to jack up the car to pump air into the tire. It worked, but they warned us to buy another tire at the first tire shop we reached.

We thanked them, said another prayer of praise and thanksgiving and headed for Huntsville. We had no money to buy a tire, and were traveling on faith, for that's the only thing we had. The drive was still fun. We talked about the situation, the wonderful sights visited, laughed at the humorous times, and sang songs of praise.

As the sun set, we watched the colors our Artist painted across the sky. This caused us to witness to each other about His goodness. Slowly, each color faded until the sky darkened and stars stealthily entered the night sky.

We arrived on the campus - penniless with a 'no-good donut' on our wheel but singing praises to God. We could have been killed, injured or kidnapped, but it was our Friend who stuck by our sides during this trial. Surely He "sticketh closer than a brother."

Linda L. Skeete

My Home Away From Home

*That's why it's so important that they be one . . . so the world can see why
You sent Me. John 17:21 (The Clear Word)*

The most vivid memory of my Oakwood experience was when I arrived in Huntsville back in 1972. We were newlyweds of exactly two whole weeks. Oakwood was our final destination directly after the honeymoon. What an adjustment that was for me! Leaving my parents' home in New York to live with a husband 1,000 miles away from all the significant people in my life. "Anxiety" mildly describes my emotions during that adjustment period.

After arriving in Huntsville, (my first time in the South) I had all the apprehension of a northerner who had heard the usual horror stories of the "old south." Needless to say, I fearfully anticipated seeing the burning crosses throughout the city as a reminder of where I was. However, it was not like that. I found the southerners to be very friendly, and neighborly. Likewise, in the community, I found the Oakwood community to be an extended family. God knew how homesick I was, so

He surrounded us with some of the finest caring Christians who helped us settle into our new life and environment. We temporarily lived with Elder Jonathon Roach's mother, Sister Bertha Roach, approximately a mile from campus. She was a dear old lady, strong in faith and quite a prayer warrior too!

In the next block lived our president, Dr. Calvin Rock. We had to pass his house everyday as we walked to campus because we had no transportation. On many occasions, Dr. Rock would be taking his three daughters to the academy, and without us ever having to flag him down, (even with his busy schedule), he would stop and give us a ride to campus. He was so down-to-earth and friendly. Just another dad taking his girls to school. I remember one morning my husband and I became impatient with each other and one began the long walk to school ahead of the other. Dr. Rock was backing out of his driveway, as he drove past, he slowed down and said to me "You know this is where Adam and Eve went wrong, when they strayed from each other." His point was well taken. I appreciated the counsel. That is the way Oakwood was, everyone was a part of the family.

This idea was demonstrated in the annual family-day Sabbath, when the cafeteria would be closed and every student was invited to the homes of faculty and staff for good home cooked meals. What a delight! In recent years, however, we have grown significantly, and can no longer collectively enjoy the College Family Sabbath. Nevertheless, this is one tradition that my family still carries on weekly in our home, as a reminder that Oakwood is a home away from home!

Sonia E. Paul

Encourage My Soul and Let Me Journey On...

*If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the utmost parts of the sea,
even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

Psalm 139:9, 10 (RSV)

As a student at Oakwood my experiences were many, but the most outstanding one was that of my Literature Evangelism Training Council (LETC). That, I realized changed my life forever and its influence lives on. Now, when I am confronted with obstacles I sing:

"Encourage my soul and let me journey on
The night is dark and I am far from home.
The storm is passing over...Alleluia"

I was one of eleven students who left "The Oaks" for Florida where we would spend the next six weeks canvassing. My reason for going was not to make money but to know God personally and I felt that this trip would do it.

From the start, there were numerous problems. One wobbling wheel of our van attracted the attention of many motorists. This included an intimidating policeman who stopped us not by his siren but by his flashing lights and strong voice over his loudspeaker as he shouted, "Will the driver of this vehicle please step out." The many breakdowns, our overcharged housing rate in Florida, the move in the middle of the night, the rough neighborhood, our fasting and praying sessions, my special meditation periods, all these made that trip an unforgettable one.

Our first workshop session was a challenge to me because like my other teammates we were expected to present our books and persuade each other to purchase them. Although usually a confident person, I remember my silent tears of frustration which streamed uncontrollably when I was unsure of myself. I can also recall my short prayer: "Lord, it took me four to five years to actually get out here. Please don't leave me now." God answered and my first field day was better than I had imagined.

Our field was the parking lots around the town and the experiences there were many, but God was our protector especially on the night I met a Hispanic-Indian looking pair. I started my canvas with a book on the prophecies, yet the man was not interested. I tried "Bible Answers" but he said he had one. My magazines canvas was likewise ineffective. When I presented the Spanish "Steps to Christ" however, his face took on the strangest look I had ever seen. He glared at me so sharply that I could almost feel that look pierce me through. Then his eyes flashed many colors including blue and green in a second before he let out a deep evil-sounding laugh as he said, "I know Him." That night when I shared my experience with my team, our leader reminded us, "Intense prayer is a necessity, because not everyone you meet out there is for Jesus."

During the last week as I packed, I reflected on my trip and concluded that my LETC experience was most valuable to me for I learned many lessons. I learned how to communicate better, to understand and to forgive, as well as how to read and meditate more on spiritual things. I also learned to let go my pride and to depend on God

fully, confident that there is nothing the Lord and I could not handle together when I trust Him. Best of all, I achieved my desire of getting to know God personally. Now, I am happy and sure that God is on my side. Even though sometimes I am by myself, I know He is always there.

Many years later, our LETC theme song still holds meaning for me, "Encourage my soul and let me journey on. The night is dark and I am far from home. The storm is passing over...Alleluia..."

Nadine Daly

A Light in the Middle of the Light

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matthew 5:16

Coming to Huntsville, Alabama, was something I told myself early in my Seventh-day Adventist experience that I would never do. Having visited here a couple of times, I was not that impressed with its environment. Not having been raised an Adventist, I did not see the real mission of being an employee of Oakwood College.

Prior to my family making the final move here, I inquired at the College about employment. You see, my husband was going to be a full-time student. The one question that stuck out in my mind was, "How am I going to witness to people who are all of the same faith as me?" My true mission I believe would be to work out in the world. Besides, all of my prior jobs had been outside of the church. The search on the campus for a job became a serious matter of prayer. My husband and I fasted and prayed asking God to give me a job that would help support the family so that my husband could realize his goal. Having claimed a job through prayer, God came through as usual and gave me above and beyond what we had asked. My question resurfaced in my mind, "How am I going to witness to people who are all of the same faith?"

My intention was only to be in Huntsville five years, then I would move back home, New Orleans, LA. Yet, I have now been here for many years. I jokingly say I did not make it clear which five I meant: fifteen, twenty-five or thirty-five.

Oakwood College is a light in the Huntsville community. Even the College's radio station, WOCG, uses a slogan that says "The Light of the Tennessee Valley." So, if I am to let my light so shine and I am working side by side with "The Light of the Tennessee Valley" then that

makes me a light in the middle of the light.

I have experienced a lot of “ups” and “downs” while working here. Some experiences were with my job and some in my personal life. But in each situation, especially the “downs,” I have grown tremendously closer to the Lord and each one made me stronger for the journey. Before I experienced these trials, I would never have thought of a trial as being a light; instead a moment of darkness. Unless you are blind, you cannot see in the darkness; it takes light. Every trial came as a light glowing in such a way that it pointed me to Jesus, my Savior, my Sustainer, my Deliverer, my Lily of the Valley, my Bright and Morning Star. The amazing thing about coming through a trial was that it was not long before God showed me what I was able to do about the new light. It was to be used to encourage and uplift someone else and point them to the Greater Light – Jesus Christ. In many cases, my co-workers.

The Lord has used not only me but other employees to encourage one another based on experiences we have had. Working together and being of the same faith, does not guarantee us a place in heaven. Satan is not barred from this place. But Satan knows Christ has a monopoly on us, if we let Him. It has been through the great Light that I have seen “how I am going to witness to people who are all of the same faith as me?” So I have vowed to hold up my light in the middle of the light so that others may see Jesus shining through me.

Sylvia Germany

“Week of Truth Celebration”: Students of Prophecy Historic Trip

Then said to the children of Israel, “In the future if anyone asks you what these stones mean, tell them that they came from the middle of the Jordan when the river was at flood stage, but that you walked over on dry ground.” Joshua 4:21-24 (The Clear Word)

The course “Gift of Prophecy” (RE-331) is a requirement for all students graduating from Oakwood College. As a teacher of a section of this course, I often talked with class members each term about a field trip to Battle Creek, one of the earliest centers of SDA history. Finally, the idea became a reality in the fall of 1997 when a busload of

students from the section taught by Dr. James Doggette joined others from my class for the adventure.

We left Huntsville at midnight, October 16, arriving at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, in time for a special tour of the Ellen G. White Estate. A copy of the book about Oakwood history by Dr. Mervyn A. Warren was forwarded to the Estate, because Oakwood was founded in 1896 as a result of the vision of Mrs. White. No wonder Dr. Warren entitled the book, "Oakwood! A Vision Splendid."

We lunched at Andrews before going on to our hotel in Stevensville where we rested and prepared for the Sabbath. Following vespers at the hotel we returned to Andrews and attended a gospel concert in the Seminary Chapel and a dramatic presentation in Buman Hall. Here we were reunited with many former Oakwoodites.

On Sabbath morning we were guests of the Tabernacle SDA Church. The speaker was Elder Don Schneider, a member of the O.C. Board. A few of us also visited the new Berian Church, but hurried back to Tabernacle where dinner was served. Following dinner, we had a conducted tour of the Adventist Village visiting the homes of James and Ellen White and other church pioneers. We also visited the Oak Hill Coventry and took note of the resting-places of the Kellogg's, Uriah Smith, Sojourner Truth, etc.

Our visit was historic in that October 12-18 had been designated "The Week of Truth" in honor of Sojourner Truth's 200th Anniversary Celebration (1797-1997). It was also Battle Creek's first National Women's Conference featuring over 72 individual events, and a host of regional and national speakers. The SDA Tabernacle was chosen for the opening ceremony of praise on Friday night October 12, 1997.

Some of us visited the "Truth Tent" where actress Alice McGill appeared as Sojourner Truth. Here the master of ceremony acknowledged the visiting class from Oakwood College in Huntsville, AL amidst thunderous applause. The group left Battle Creek at 10:00 Saturday night, excited about the wonderful adventure; being more informed about our church's history; and happy to be the first class from Oakwood to make the historic trip.

Roy Malcolm

Epilogue

You may not have realized that you would take a journey when you picked up this book, but that's exactly what you have done! You and I and all other readers have taken a remarkable journey straight through the heart and soul of Oakwood College. That's where the stories and experiences come from—straight from the hearts of the writers. And that's where the miracles come from—straight from the heart of God.

If you are prone to discouragement, read through again and see how many times God lifts His children up. If you have little or no money, read through again and know that everything on earth is the Lord's, and note the many times He shares of His riches with His children. If your health has been broken by illness or accident, read through again and see how God restores health anew; how He makes His children whole for mercy's sake. And if your soul pants for God, by all means, read through again, and learn of Him, His love, His kindness, His deliverance, and His sustaining power, from the writers who have come to know Him better, and who were willing to pour it all out on paper.

The blessings flowed from God's heart to their lives, and now to ours. What blessings there are for us all!

Kyna D. Hinson



Appendices

Commissioned
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Autographs

Commisioned

Write the vision...make it plain...

Habakkuk 2:2

Do you have the “gift of gab” or writing? Some may not realize that writing is a gift. The power of words is something that many of us take for granted. Helen Steiner Rice in a poem entitled “Heart Gifts” says this:

A cheerful smile, a friendly word,
A sympathetic nod
Are priceless little treasures
From the storehouse of our God.

Even though the writer is talking about the spoken word, the written word is merely the spoken word put on paper. Take time to write those inspirational words that you have locked away in your mind and share them with others through the written word. It has been said that a person’s gifts make room for him/her. Gifts come in all shapes and sizes as well as guises. Remember that through your writing you can:

Give of yourself
Inspire someone to accept Christ
Free yourself or someone else from a heavy burden
Tell the truth of God’s Love

Then write.

Karen Tucker

About the Literary Guild

The Literary Guild, formerly the Literary Links Club, founded in 1986 by Dr. Cecily Daly, has devoted itself to the enhancement of literary skills through critical reading and creative writing. The Literary Guild is also responsible for developing and sponsoring programs that help to enrich students' cultural, intellectual and social life. Its first publication, *Joy Notes*, a literary creation is a compilation of episodes of the Oakwood experience written by members of the Oakwood College family.

This student club has long outgrown its embryonic name "The Reading Club" and its birthplace, the Developmental Reading class at the Center for Academic Advancement (CAA). Since then, the club has been successful in producing numerous literary activities that include book fairs and writing workshops. In addition, students' articles have obtained acceptance for magazine publications. These are only a sample of our contributions of literary and educational service to the Oakwood community or to those who desire to develop an appreciation for these activities.

The Literary Guild is for anyone who enjoys or would like to enjoy reading and writing. We meet to read original poetry, review books and examine topics that enhance both reading and writing. We read our own work, plan and sponsor writing workshops, visit places of historical and literary value, view videos together, publish a quarterly newsletter and undertake numerous projects related to reading and writing. Our constitution designates that "all our activities produce literary creations and focus on the appreciation of literature."

For information on how you may participate in the activities of this club and enhance your literary skills, please contact the Department of English and Communications at Oakwood College, at (256) 726-7186, (256) 726-7196, or visit the Literary Guild website at www.oakwood.edu/english. Email the Literary Guild at literaryguild@oakwood.edu.

Join Us!

*Participate in
Critical Reading and Creative Writing!*

*Laud the Pen!
Bless the Page!*

*Join the
Oakwood College Literary Guild/
American Christian Writers - Chapter 27
and
Celebrate Literary Creations!*

Litany of the Literary Guild

If you plan to use your time and talents for your Maker then join in this Litany. The chorus is your response.

Solo: For talents You have blessed us with

Chorus: We praise Your name

Solo: For composing and writing, our literary gifts

Chorus: We laud Your kindness

Solo: In service to you

Chorus: We dedicate our skills

Solo: For fulfillment and success

Chorus: Accept our gratitude

Solo: Will each of you take this challenge to
maximize your literary gifts?

Chorus: Yes we will.

We challenge ourselves to be ready when writing time comes
We challenge ourselves to be pleasant even when things are not fun
We challenge ourselves to be willing after we've done our best
We challenge ourselves to be committed though we may feel stressed
We challenge ourselves to be prayerful each and every day.
We challenge ourselves to be sanctified for tasks that come our way.
Lord, we challenge ourselves to wisely use our talents and our time.
To give You the highest praise, and magnify Your matchless name.

Amen!

*The challenge of this litany was composed by Tracy Mathis, a
communications major.*

Membership Form

- ☐ Yes, I want to join the Oakwood Literary Guild/ACW 27, and become an active member.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

- ☐ Yes, I want to be a sponsor and give a gift membership to a student.

Donor's Name _____

Telephone Number _____

- ☐ Yes, I want to be a mentor and assist a student with writing skills.

Mentor's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

*For more information, contact:
Oakwood College Literary Guild/ACW* Chapter 27
Department of English and Communications
Oakwood College
7000 Adventist Blvd.
Huntsville, AL 35896
(256) 726-7186/7196*

**ACW – American Christian Writers*

Twenty Benefits of Guild Membership

Special membership cards

Calendar of literary events

Eligibility for summer internships (editorial and otherwise).

Accessibility to Literary Club trips

Discounts:

- 5 percent off any ACW conference

- 10 percent off subscription for the *Christian Communicator*

- Tapes and books from American Christian Writers

- Oakwood College Literary Guild's book *Joy Notes!*

- Books at local participating bookstores

- In-house competitions

- Club parties and celebrations.

Publication opportunities:

- Students whose work is published receive payment from the sponsoring publication

- Those published through the club are asked to give a small donation of \$5.00 to the guild

- Consultation with editors

- Networking with other clubs nationwide

- Participation in club parties and celebrations

- Eligibility for a free copy of *Joy Notes!*

- Free guild newsletter

- Free writing workshops

- Free book writing mentoring workshops

- Free prizes and awards

To be eligible for any of these, the member will complete the registration, and the president and treasurer will sign the form.

The Oakwood Experience

Bible Paraphrases

King James Version: Psalm 51:8-12

Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit.

Ayris Graham's Version:

Make me feel happy Lord and fix the parts of me that are broken. Look past my sins and forgive me for them. Give me a clean, pure heart and with it give me a new spirit. Do not send me out of Your presence nor take Your Holy Spirit from me. Give me back the joy of salvation and hold me up with Your spirit.

King James Version: Jeremiah 8:19-22

Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because them that dwell in a far country: Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

Christin Stone's Version:

Look at my people and hear their cry. Why do they do these things when I am so available to them? Why do they continue to do the things that make Me mad? I have given them their last chance and their time is up. But because they are in pain I am also in pain. Have I not given them every opportunity to change their ways? Then why have they not responded to My message?

King James Version: Proverbs 16:9

A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.

Chanel Sales' Version:

Man will plan his course, but God ultimately guides his path.

The Living Bible Version: John 14:2

There are many homes up there where my Father lives, and I am going to prepare them for your coming.

Roy Willis Jr.'s Version:

Within my Dad's dwelling are multiple large homes: if I were telling a lie, then I would not tell you at all. I am in the process of creating a dwelling place for you.

The King James Version: Proverbs 3:5, 6

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

Kean Baxter's Version:

Trust in God fully and have no doubts. Do not go by what you think you know, but rely on Him in every situation. If you do this He will make known to you where you should go and what you should do.

King James Version: Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Falaq Bovell's Version:

The Lord is my help whether I call Him or not. He will be there for me in any situation and will always watch over me. I have had so many problems and the Lord has kept me sane. If anyone can keep me sane that has to be a Higher Power!

King James Version: Psalms 63:3

Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Ricky Hall's Version:

You are so good and just to us - Your love knows no bounds, I want to love You. You are the reason why I live a newfound joy I can't contain. Therefore I shall praise you always all the days of my life.

King James Version: 1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us up from all unrighteousness.

Gregory Louissaint's Version:

If we admit to our wrongdoing to God, He will be more than willing to forgive us and clean us up from all impurities.

King James Version: Psalms 34:1-3

I will bless the lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. Oh magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

Lincoln Smith's Version:

Lord, I will bless you everyday. Your praise will continue to be on my lips. My soul shall always rejoice in you, O Lord. The meek will hear this and be happy. Come with me, glorify the Lord of my Salvation and let us prwise His name together.

King James Version: Lamentations 3:37

Who is He that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?

Alethea Skinner's Version:

Who is that person who can utter any statment, and make that statement become a reality when God hath said it will not? I rest in confidence on his word.

King James Version: 1 Corinthians 10:13

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Cavelle Regis' Version:

You will not go through any difficulty that someone else has not experienced. However, you must depend on God, for He will not allow Satan to tempt you beyond what you can endure but rather He will give you strength to manage your suffering so that you will not be defeated

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Students Former and Current

Many people see writing as a talent that only English and communications majors display. The following Oakwoodites disprove this fallacy. Writing is telling your story the way you want it to be heard. These students, of various majors, each had a story and told it. Now be encouraged. Join the club and tell yours!

Ambrose, Amanda
Ashe, Brian
Bartholomew, Alannah
Baxter, Kean
Betts, La Tasha
Boney, Crystal
Bovell, Falaq
Boyce, Joel
Caise, Khymberli
Campbell, Bradford
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Cyrus, Sophya
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Sobomehin, Olawunmi
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Sterjn, Natasha
Stone, Christin
Taylor, Shawanna
Thomas, Christina
Thompson, Joseph
Thompson, Quenesther
Tillmuth, Nadine
Underwood, Corzetta
Watlington, April
Wesson, Talitha
Williams, Daniel
Williams, Jr., Michael
Willis Jr., Roy

Some Early Joy Notes

September 22, 1985

Dear Mrs. Monroe:

Your name is one of many persons that has been selected to be cheered, courtesy of Joy Incorporated.

Joy Incorporated is a pseudonym for a group of people who spend time making others happy. This is the first of many Joys that you will receive. Please enjoy it.

Yours truly,
Joy Inc.



Hilary
Carter Hall

Date _____

Dear Hilary, Thanks so much for helping me with my chemistry the other night. You don't know how much I appreciate your help. I think I did well on the test. When I got to the part of balancing equations I started crying in a little bit but I remembered what you told me and things worked out pretty good. Thanks alot Andrea Jenkins

Nadie, Hello! Sister, Well, I thought it would be great to send you a message of concern and love. In short, I like to say I appreciate you as a person and friend.

Hil.

Comments on *Joy Notes*

Joy Notes brings together, in short passages, the original words of the writers of the Oakwood College Literary Guild. I found it well written, inspiring, and extremely interesting. The personal touch of each author is unified in a collection of thoughts that echoes deep feelings and a sense of appreciation for God's goodness and personal watchfulness over each of our lives. The OC Literary Guild has acted creatively by using the art of communication, the power of production, and the gift of self-expression in fashioning *Joy Notes* into such a delightful volume. Congratulations!

*Sandra Price, Ed.D., Chair
Department of Business and Information Systems*

I enjoyed reading *Joy Notes*, published by the Oakwood College Literary Guild. It gave me a kind of insight into the life and thinking of Oakwood College students that is not always available. The poems and devotionals are refreshing and uplifting. Congratulations on getting students to write and providing a place for them, where they can get published.

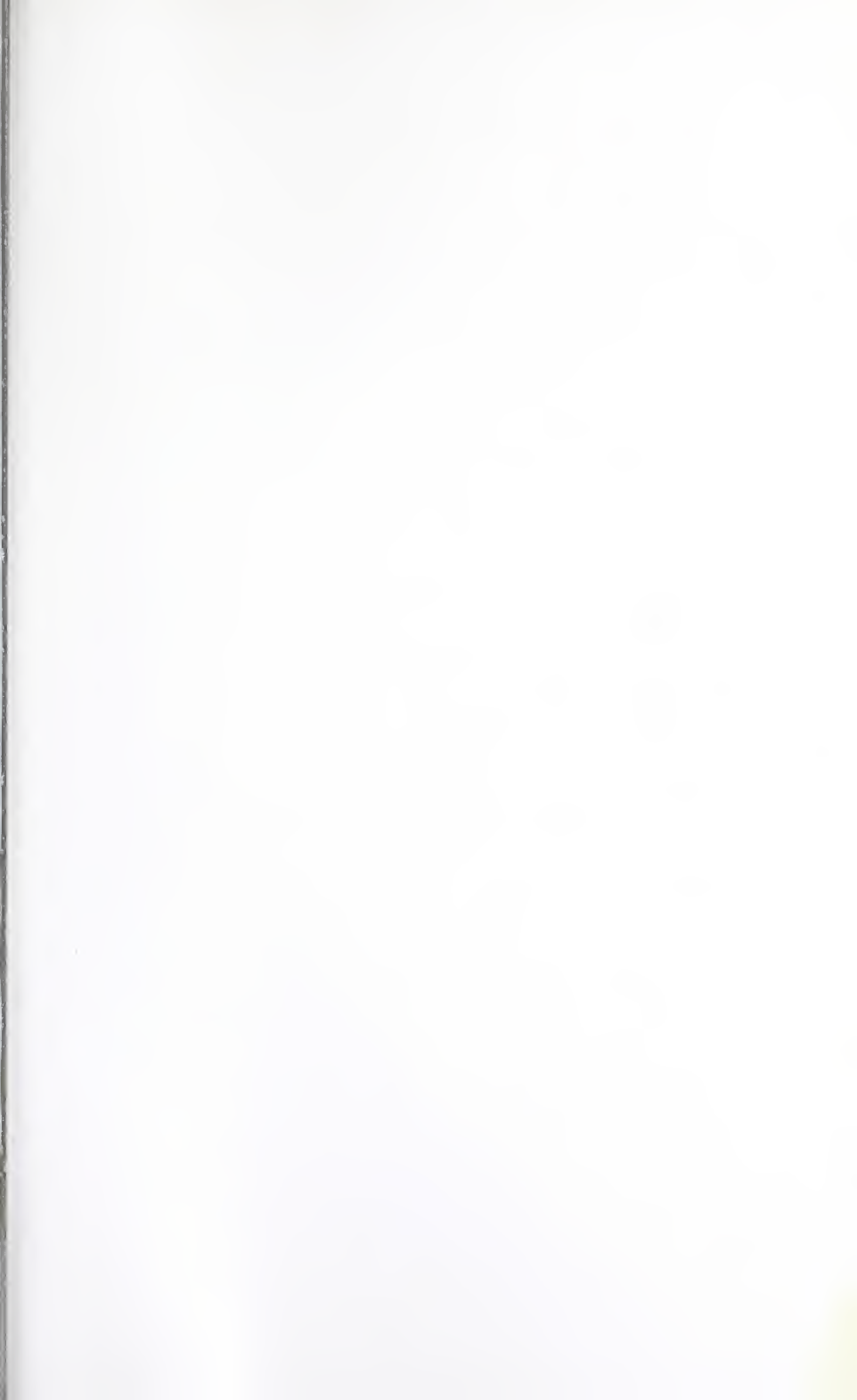
*Ciro Sepulveda, Ph.D., Chair
Department of History*

Autographs



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Cecily Daly is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Communications at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. She received her doctorate at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. Currently she teaches Composition and English Methods. As a reading specialist she teaches Developmental Reading at the Center for Academic Advancement. Daly writes for a number of magazines as a free-lance writer, and has also authored two books, one of which focuses on under-prepared college students. Her passion to assist students in developing effective reading/writing skills led her to establish the Oakwood College Literary Guild - American Christian Writers, Chapter 27.



JoyNotes!



Officers of the Oakwood College Literary Guild

JoyNotes! The Oakwood Experience immortalizes the cherished memories of many Oakwoodites and opens a window on the "Oakwood experience." In 100 short moments, you will sample the intermingling of diverse cultures, a blending of many personalities, and a weaving of precious memories. ***JoyNotes!*** will bless the hearts of all who are willing to appreciate this special flavor to life.

*Produced by members of the
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